

THE
PEACE-
PRESIDENT

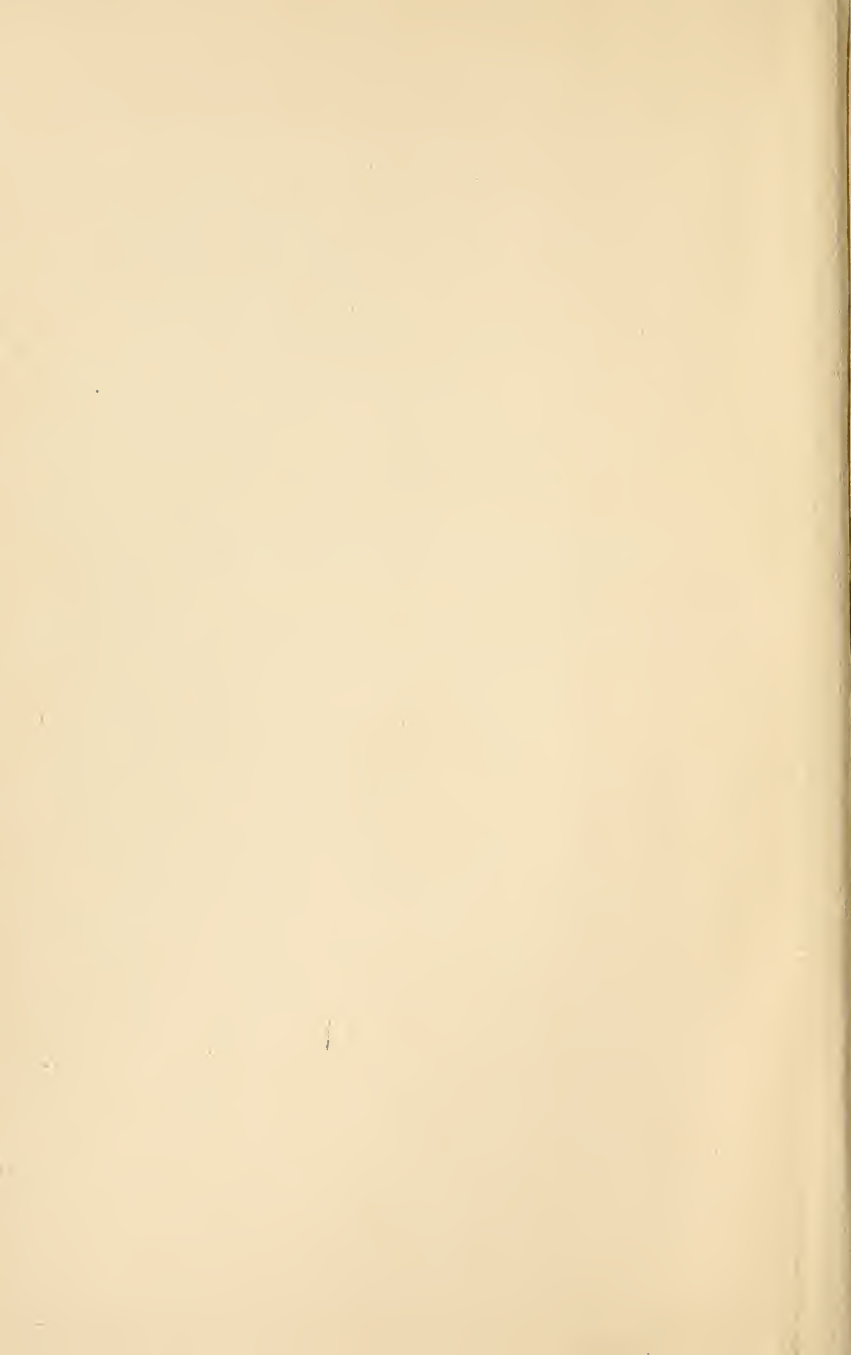
WILLIAM
ARCHER







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A BRIEF APPRECIATION

BY
WILLIAM ARCHER



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NOTE

For the early career of President Wilson, the chief authority is Mr. William B. Hale's "Woodrow Wilson: The Story of His Life" (1912). Excellent studies of his work as an educator and a statesman will be found in Mr. Henry J. Ford's "Woodrow Wilson: The Man and His Work" (1916), and (from the British point of view) in Mr. H. Wilson Harris's "President Wilson: His Problems and Policy" (1917). To all three books I am greatly indebted.

W. A.

INTRODUCTORY

THE United States of America have passed through two great crises of history—the crisis which gave them birth as an independent nation, and the crisis which decided that they were to remain for ever one and indivisible, and that negro slavery was no longer to be tolerated within their bounds. Each of these crises brought to the front a man, not only of lofty spiritual stature, but of the purest order of greatness. George Washington was not, perhaps, what is accounted a man of genius. His powers were solid rather than dazzling. A splenetic Scotch sophist could, without manifest absurdity, sneer at him as merely “a good land-surveyor.” But he had what the crisis demanded more than brilliancy of genius: he had greatness of character. Never was polity more fortunate than the United States in its founder and patron saint. Abraham Lincoln, on the other hand, was a man of genius if ever there was one; yet what endears his name to his

countrymen, and to all lovers of freedom throughout the world, is not his genius but his sheer goodness. The rugged frontiersman, the Illinois country lawyer, was a nobleman in the highest sense of the word. The people of America were much wiser than they realized when they sent that long, lean, ungainly Westerner to the White House. Yet we cannot but believe that some sort of happy instinct guided the democracy in making so brilliant a selection.

In August, 1914, a third great crisis found, as some of us believe, a third great man in the presidential chair of the United States. The issue in this crisis was an entirely new one; not whether the nation should be independent, not whether it should be indivisible, but whether it should attempt to hold aloof from the shaping of the world's future, in fancied inviolability, or should accept the share in that momentous task imposed on it at once by its strength and by its ideals. There was much that was specious, and much that carried the weight of high authority, to be said in favor of the former alternative. The question simply was whether America should realize that the world of to-day was an

entirely different world from that in which the tradition of aloofness was established, and that her national ideals of peace and democracy were as formidably menaced by events in Europe as though the Atlantic Ocean had been no broader than the Straits of Dover.

The President in office when that crisis burst upon the world had been elected on wholly different issues. But once more fortune had marvelously favored the United States. He proved to be a man in whom the wisdom of patience was no less conspicuous than the wisdom of courage. So long as it seemed that American ideals might be safeguarded, and the future of the world secured, without the active participation of his country in the vast calamity of war, he held his hand, he disregarded the clamor of impatient spirits on either side of the ocean, and he awaited the time when either the skies should clear, or they should so darken that not even the most ostrich-like optimism could imagine the United States unthreatened by the tornado. Meanwhile the American people had, in a hotly-contested election, reaffirmed its belief that the man they had chosen in calmer times, and in view of simpler problems, was the strong

man whose hand was required on the helm of the ship of state.

The skies, as we know, did not clear—they grew ever more lowering—and as soon as the moment came when the interests of the nation and of the world manifestly demanded that counsels of patience should give place to counsels of resolution, Woodrow Wilson spoke unhesitatingly the decisive word, and found a united people behind him. Is it premature to recognize in his whole course of action an example of lofty and intrepid statesmanship, justly comparable with anything recorded of his two great predecessors? May not one even go further, and say that never did crisis in history find, or produce, a man more splendidly adequate to the task imposed upon him?

For the past two years, no living man has held a more conspicuous or a more responsible position than Mr. Wilson. All the world has hung upon his utterances; and to all lovers of freedom and justice—to all whose one consolation in calamity has been the hope that the world would profit by the awful lesson—his utterances have been a constant source of inspiration and of confidence. His idealism, on

the one hand, has never faltered, while on the other hand his sane sense of the practical needs of the situation has never failed. To millions of people in allied, in neutral, and even in enemy countries, the knowledge that this strong, just man had his hand on the levers of statecraft has given inexpressible reassurance.

Since the great turn of fortune in July, 1918—since the Landslide of Autocracy set in—Mr. Wilson's position has been unique and unparalleled. In virtue of the mandate of a great people: in virtue, too, of his own character and faculty: he has at more than one juncture been in very truth the arbiter of the destinies of the world. In the name of democracy, he has spoken the doom of empires. To this man of plain Scotch-Irish parentage, this son of an obscure Presbyterian minister, Hapsburgs and Hohenzollerns have come truckling for mercy, only to be told, calmly and sternly, that mankind has no longer any use for them. The wonderful, the incredible drama is a theme for an *Æschylus* or a *Shakespeare*. We, its living spectators, can find no adequate words for the emotion it excites in us.

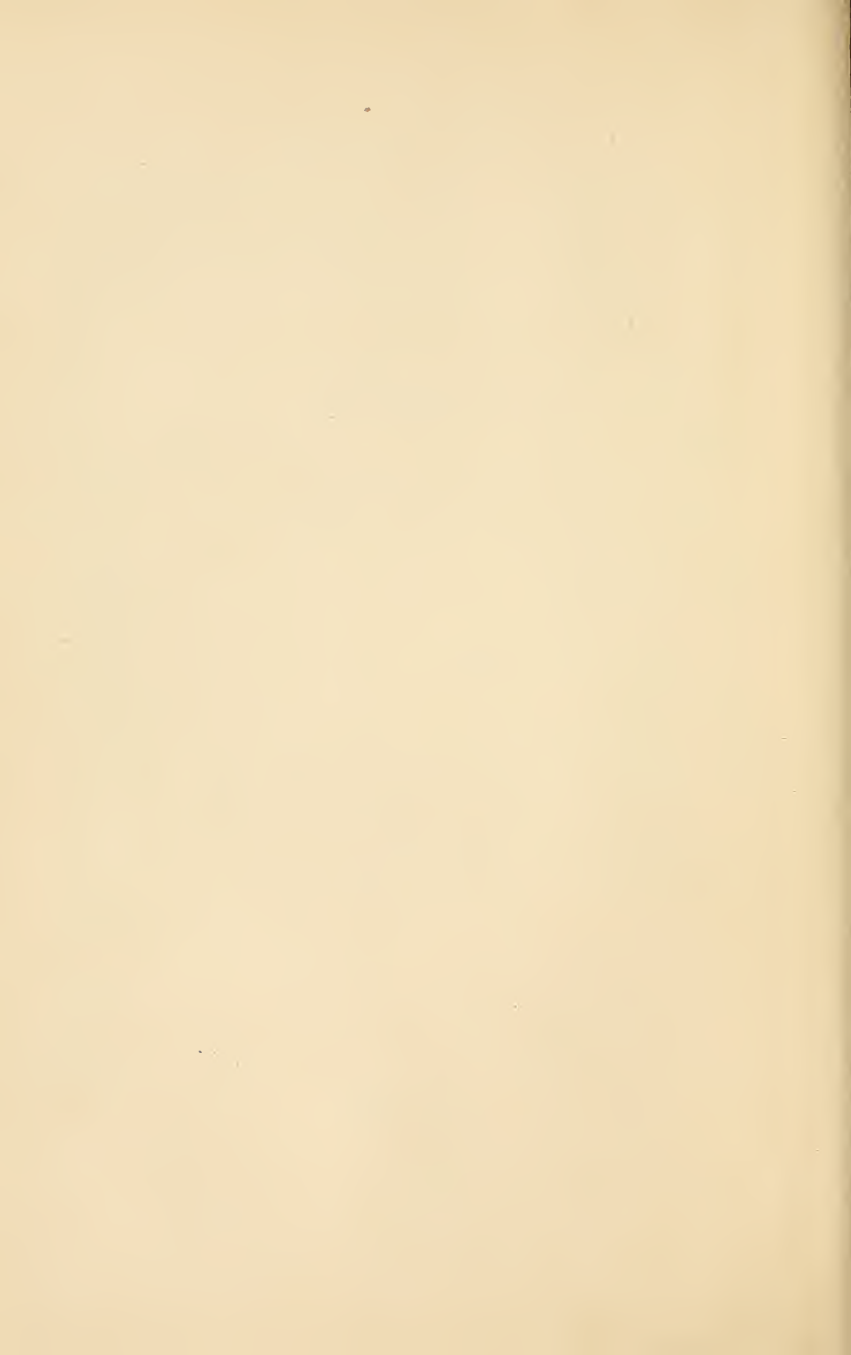
But the career and character of its protago-

nist we can and must study. Difficult though it be to see a contemporary in just perspective, this is a case in which the attempt must be made. The purpose of the following pages is to give, in the briefest compass, a sketch of the career and character of the man to whom we owe the inspiring spectacle of a great nation accepting, from motives of pure world-patriotism, the gravest responsibility which a people can take upon itself, and throwing its weight, at the decisive instant, into the most momentous war of the modern world.

The earlier and less widely-known stages of the President's career have been more fully treated than the later, which are matters of recent history. Wherever it has seemed possible, Mr. Wilson has been left to tell his own story, through extracts from his writings and speeches.

CONTENTS

| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|---|------|
| I. YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD | 1 |
| II. THE MAN OF LETTERS | 9 |
| III. PRINCETON | 28 |
| IV. NEW JERSEY | 39 |
| V. THE WHITE HOUSE | 49 |
| VI. MEXICO | 73 |
| VII. INTO THE WAR | 82 |
| VIII. PEACE AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS . | 109 |
| APPENDIX | 115 |



THE PEACE-PRESIDENT

I

YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD

THOMAS WOODROW WILSON—the “Thomas” seems soon to have been dropped by general consent—was born at Staunton, Virginia, on December 28, 1856. His paternal grandfather, James Wilson, emigrated from Ulster in 1807, and married, in Philadelphia, Anne Adams, an Ulster girl who had been among his fellow-passengers. He went westward, about 1812, to Steubenville, Ohio, and there a son, Joseph Ruggles—the youngest of seven—was born to him in 1822. All the seven sons learned their father's trade, and became printers; but the transition from printing to journalism was easy, and James Wilson founded two papers, the *Western Herald* in Steubenville, and the *Penn-*

sylvania Advocate in Pittsburg, both of which remained in his possession till his death in 1857. His youngest son soon dropped the family trade in order to enter the Presbyterian ministry. Though licensed as a preacher, he at first devoted himself mainly to teaching, and in 1846 obtained a post in the Male Academy at his birthplace, Steubenville. There he met Miss Janet Woodrow, daughter of the Rev. Dr. Thomas Woodrow, a Scotch Presbyterian minister, who had crossed the Border to Carlisle, where his family of eight were all born. From Cumberland they removed to Canada, and thence to Ohio. His daughter Janet was a pupil at the Steubenville Academy for Girls when she made the acquaintance of Joseph Wilson. They were married on June 7, 1849. The future President was their third child, but eldest son. Another son was born ten years later.

Joseph Wilson seems to have been a man of varied attainments, for we find him acting at one time as "professor extraordinary" of rhetoric at one Southern college; shortly afterwards as professor of chemistry and natural science at another; and later as professor of

pastoral and evangelistic theology at a third. He also took pastoral charge of various churches. From 1858 to 1870 he was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Augusta, Georgia; and it was in this town of some 15,000 people that the young Woodrow spent his childhood and early boyhood. The great Civil War never came very near to the quiet household. It no doubt caused both perturbations and privations, but does not seem to have left any deep impression on the boy's mind. His earliest memory, however, is of "two men meeting in the street outside his father's house, and one of them declaring 'Lincoln is elected, and there'll be war.'"

The chief effect of the war upon Woodrow's personal fortunes was to retard the beginning of his education. It is scarcely credible that, in a literate household, a highly intelligent boy passed the age of nine before he was even able to read; but it is certain that until he was fourteen the only school he attended was one opened in Augusta by one J. T. Derry, a Confederate veteran whose qualifications do not seem to have been of the highest. Meanwhile his taste for literature was fostered by the domestic habit

of reading aloud, which introduced him to the works of Scott and Dickens, among other authors.

In 1870 the family removed to Columbia, South Carolina, where Woodrow went to the local academy. Three years later he entered Davidson College, North Carolina, but after a year's attendance his health temporarily broke down. His family had now removed to Wilmington, North Carolina, and there he spent a year of comparative rest, at the same time preparing himself for entrance to Princeton University, where he matriculated in September, 1875. Up to this point, that is to say, until his nineteenth year, his whole life had been spent in the Southern States.

His academic record at Princeton was creditable but not brilliant. We are told that "his general average for the four years was 90.3," which may strike the uninitiated as rather good; but it is added that "he stood thirty-eighth in a graduating class of 106." His literary ability, however, did not fail to make its mark, and he was for a year sole editor of the college magazine, the *Princetonian*. He was reckoned among the best speakers in the Whig Hall de-

bating club. On one occasion he was chosen to represent Whig Hall in a debate with another society, on a subject to be picked at random from among a number thrown into a hat. The subject drawn was "Tariffs," and it should have been Wilson's part to plead the cause of Protection against Free Trade. But he would not, even as an academic exercise, argue against his convictions. He retired from the debate, and the champion chosen in his place was defeated. This incident shows a remarkable earnestness in so young a man. Paradox—a deliberately insincere display of intellectual adroitness—has usually irresistible attractions for the clever undergraduate.

Before he left college, Wilson contributed to the *International Review* a remarkable article on "Cabinet Government in the United States," which "contains in embryo much of his subsequent thinking and writing upon Government." Already he is concerned about the lack of an efficient connecting-link, in the American constitution, between the legislative and the executive, and urges that such a link would be supplied by a responsible Cabinet. The following passage was repeated almost word for word in

many of his campaign speeches during the Presidential Election of 1912:

Congress is a deliberative body in which there is little real deliberation; a legislature which legislates with no real discussion of its business. Our Government is practically carried on by irresponsible committees. Too few Americans take the trouble to inform themselves as to the methods of Congressional management; and as a consequence, not many have perceived that almost absolute power has fallen into the hands of men whose irresponsibility prevents the regulation of their conduct by the people from whom they derive their authority.

Already the future President was deeply interested in English political thought. He had read Chatham, Burke, Brougham, Macaulay and especially Bagehot, for whom his admiration was unbounded. Moreover, through the running commentary in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, he had familiarized himself with the parliamentary history of the sixties and seventies, when Gladstone and Disraeli were at the height of their fame. Already the bent of his mind was consciously and definitely political. The vital things of literature interested him profoundly, but for antiquarianism he had neither

taste nor time. He refused to compete for a prize of \$125 which it was thought he might easily have won, because he found that it would have involved a close study of the works of Ben Jonson.

After taking his degree of A.B. in 1879, Wilson studied law for a year at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville. Here we find him delivering an oration on John Bright, and contributing to the college magazine an article on Gladstone. His health again becoming unsatisfactory, he spent a year at home, before entering upon the profession he had chosen, and establishing himself as a lawyer at Atlanta, Georgia. Fortunately, as we are now apt to think, he waited for clients in vain; and in 1883 he left Atlanta to enter upon a post-graduate course at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. Here he obtained a fellowship in history, and, by means of a thesis on "Congressional Government," the degree of Ph.D. In 1885 he joined the teaching staff of Bryn Mawr, a famous college for women, then newly established in the outskirts of Philadelphia, where he lectured on history and political economy. From 1888 to 1890 he held the Professorship of History in the

Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut. In 1890 he returned to Princeton as Professor of Jurisprudence and Politics, and at Princeton he remained for twenty years. He had married in 1885 Miss Ellen Louise Axon, of Savannah, Georgia. This lady—whom he had thanked in more than one dedication for “gentle benefits which can neither be measured nor repaid”—died in August, 1914, just as the storm of war burst upon the world. In December, 1915, Mr. Wilson married Mrs. Norman Galt, formerly Miss Edith Bolling, of Wythesville, Virginia.

II

THE MAN OF LETTERS

THE years of his professorship at Princeton—before he entered upon the organizing and administrative duties of a University President—were the chief years of Woodrow Wilson's literary activity. How significant, and how full of promise, that activity was, we have scarcely realized on this side of the Atlantic.

His authorship falls into three branches: he is a writer upon political science, he is an historian, and he is an essayist. In all three branches his work is full of character and vitality. He brings to it a vigorous and comprehensive mind, fine literary culture, high ideals, and a broad, sympathetic humanity. He shows himself from the first an accomplished writer, trained in the only good school—that is to say, a loving study of the best models in the language. Those of us who made our first ac-

quaintance with his style in reading diplomatic "notes" presumed to proceed from his pen, may have thought it somewhat cumbrous and conventional. No epithets could be less applicable to his unofficial and unfettered literary work. The inference is either that, in his diplomatic documents, some other hand actually held the pen, or that he was trammelled by the sense that in such communications anything like individuality or lightness of touch would be out of place.

His first book was the Johns Hopkins University thesis, "Congressional Government: A Study in American Politics,"* published when he was twenty-eight. Seldom has so unromantic a theme inspired so readable a book. One learns from it not only the forms of the machinery which has grown up for expressing in practice the theories of the American Constitution, but also, by way of contrast, a good deal about the workings of the British parliamentary system. For Mr. Wilson is above everything a student of comparative politics, and never loses sight of the intimate relationship between American and

* Called in the English edition (Constable, 1914), "A Study of the American Constitution."

British institutions. Of the actual style of the book, a few brief specimens must suffice:

Hamilton and Jefferson did not draw apart because the one had been an ardent and the other only a lukewarm friend of the Constitution, so much as because they were so different in natural bent and temper that they would have been like to disagree and come to drawn points wherever or however brought into contact. The one had inherited warm blood and a bold sagacity, while in the other *a negative philosophy ran suitably through cool veins*. They had not been meant for yoke-fellows.

How excellent an expression is that which I have italicized! There is a touch of Stevenson about it.

The House sits, not for a serious discussion, but to sanction the conclusions of its Committees as rapidly as possible. It legislates in its committee-rooms; not by the determinations of majorities, but by the resolutions of especially-commissioned minorities; so that it is not far from the truth to say that Congress in session is Congress on public exhibition, while Congress in its committee-rooms is Congress at work.

I know not how better to describe our form of government in a single phrase than by calling it a government by chairmen of the Standing Committees of Congress. This *disintegrate ministry*, as it figures

on the floor of the House of Representatives, has many peculiarities.

One must take this passage in its full context in order quite to appreciate the admirable felicity of "disintegrate ministry."

Some of the Committees are made up of strong men, the majority of them of weak men; and the weak are as influential as the strong. The country can get the counsel and guidance of its ablest representatives only upon one or two subjects; upon the rest it must be content with the impotent service of the feeble. Only a very small part of its important business can be done well; the system provides for having the rest of it done miserably, and the whole of it taken together done at haphazard.

Indirect taxes offend scarcely anybody. . . . They are very sly, and have at command a thousand successful disguises. . . . Very few of us taste the tariff in our sugar; and I suppose that even very thoughtful toppers do not perceive the license-tax in their whisky. There is little wonder that financiers have always been nervous in dealing with direct but confident and free of hand in the laying of indirect taxes.

Executive and legislature are separated by a hard and fast line, which sets them apart in what was meant to be independence, but has come to amount to isolation.

It is natural that orators should be the leaders of a self-governing people. Men may be clever and engaging speakers . . . without being equipped even tolerably for any of the high duties of the statesman; but men can scarcely be orators without that force of character, that readiness of resource, that clearness of vision, that grasp of intellect, that courage of conviction, that earnestness of purpose, and that instinct and capacity for leadership, which are the eight horses that draw the triumphal chariot of every leader and ruler of free men.

Our English cousins have worked out for themselves a wonderfully perfect scheme of government by practically making their monarchy unmonarchical. They have made of it a republic steadied by a revered aristocracy, and pivoted upon a stable throne. . . . I think that a philosophical analysis of any successful and beneficent system of self-government will disclose the fact that its only effectual checks consist in a mixture of elements, in a combination of seemingly contradictory political principles; that the British government is perfect in proportion as it is unmonarchical, and ours safe in proportion as it is undemocratic.

“Congressional Government” was an essay in criticism rather than a work of systematic exposition. Mr. Wilson followed it up four years later (1889) with a much solider, though scarcely more valuable, contribution to political science.

This was entitled "The State: Elements of Historical and Practical Politics," and was, in fact, a text-book which had grown up out of the material collected for his Princeton lectures. It was a pioneer work, so far, at any rate, as the English language is concerned. "In preparing it," said Mr. Wilson in his preface, "I labored under the disadvantage of having no model. So far as I was able to ascertain, no text-book of like scope and purpose had hitherto been attempted." Its all-embracing "scope" may be gathered from its table of contents:

- I. The Earliest Forms of Government.
- II. The Governments of Greece.
- III. The Government of Rome.
- IV. Roman Dominion and Roman Law.
- V. Teutonic Polity and Government during the Middle Ages.
- VI. The Government of France.
- VII. The Governments of Germany.
- VIII. The Governments of Switzerland.
- IX. The Dual Monarchies: Austria-Hungary; Sweden, Norway.
- X. The Government of Great Britain.
- XI. The Government of the United States.
- XII. Summary: Constitutional and Administrative Developments.

- XIII. The Nature and Forms of Government.
- XIV. Law: its Nature and Development.
- XV. The Functions of Government.
- XVI. The Objects of Government.

In view of this multiplicity of topics, it is scarcely surprising to find that the book runs to 1,536 paragraphs, and (in the English Edition) to 639 pages. In introducing the English edition of 1899, Mr. Oscar Browning wrote:

Scholars well qualified to judge are of opinion that in coming years the interest now taken in Economics will be shared with Political Science. Whenever that Science is regarded not only as indispensable to an historian, but as the very backbone to Historical Study, Mr. Wilson will be considered as the foremost, if not the first, of those who rendered possible an intelligent study of a department of Sociology, upon which the happiness and good government of the human race essentially depend.

How little did Mr. Browning think, as he wrote these words, that the man whose theoretical work he thus appreciated, would be the executive leader of his hundred-million countrymen in a crisis in which the "happiness and good government of the human race" were indeed the issue

at stake, and would lead them warily, judiciously, and yet resolutely, in the paths of far-seeing and disinterested world-citizenship.

Mr. Wilson's chief work as a historian is his "History of the American People." It first appeared, in part at any rate, as a series of articles in *Harper's Magazine*, entitled "Colonies and Nation." In its final form—five large volumes, profusely and excellently illustrated—it does for the United States what the illustrated edition of Green's "Short History" does for Britain. Mr. Wilson's style is as well adapted for narrative as for exposition. Despite its brevity, the opening paragraph of his second chapter, "The Swarming of the English," is sufficient to show that, no more than Macaulay, Froude or Green, does he forget that history, while it may or may not be a branch of science, is assuredly a branch of literature:

It was the end of the month of April, 1607, when three small vessels entered the lonely capes of the Chesapeake, bringing the little company who were to make the first permanent English settlement in America, at Jamestown, in Virginia. Elizabeth was dead. The masterful Tudor monarchs had passed from the stage and James, the pedant king, was on the throne.

The "Age of the Stuarts" had come, with its sinister policies and sure tokens of revolution. Men then living were to see Charles lie dead upon the scaffold at Whitehall. After that would come Cromwell; and then the second Charles, "restored," would go his giddy way through a demoralizing reign, and leave his sullen brother to face another revolution. It was to be an age of profound constitutional change, deeply significant for all the English world; and the colonies in America, notwithstanding their separate life and the breadth of the sea, were to feel all the deep stir of the fateful business. The revolution wrought at home might in crossing to them suffer a certain sea-change, but it would not lose its use or its strong flavor of principle.

In 1893 Mr. Wilson contributed a volume on "Division and Reunion"—that is to say, on the Civil War, its causes and consequences—to a series of "Epochs of American History." It is a school or college manual, highly condensed and yet readable. Mr. Wilson's literary art, however, is nowhere seen to greater advantage than in his popular "Life of Washington," a truly fascinating book. Its narrative style is full of charm, and, while the personality of the hero stands out in due relief, the figures of the men who surrounded him are delineated with a sure and vivid

touch. It is, perhaps, part of the secret of Mr. Wilson's success as a leader of men, that he has something of the dramatist's interest in individual human character. The book deserves to rank as a classic of historical biography, and ought to be much better known than it is on this side of the Atlantic.

Apart from scattered magazine papers, Mr. Wilson's work as an essayist is contained in two volumes: "An Old Master" (1893), and "Mere Literature" (1896). The former has unfortunately not been accessible to me; but the latter affords ample material for an estimate of his qualities as a writer of "mere literature." And they are very high qualities. A prominent characteristic of his manner—not always a virtue, but seldom carried to such excess as to make it a vice—is the Emersonian habit of conveying thought by means of what may be called a running-fire of generalizations. Here is a passage chosen literally at random—a *sors Wilsoniana*—from an essay entitled: "The Author Himself":

Culture broadens and sweetens literature, but native sentiment and unmarred individuality create it. Not all mental power lies in the processes of thinking.

There is power also in passion, in personality, in simple, native, uncritical conviction, in unschooled feeling. The power of science, of system is executive, not stimulative. I do not find that I derive inspiration, but only information, from the learned historians and analysts of liberty; but from the sonneteers, the poets, who speak its spirit and its exalted purpose, and who, recking nothing of the historical method, obey only the high method of their own hearts—what may a man not gain of courage and confidence in the right way of politics?

From every page of these essays there breathes an intense love of literature and of the fine things of literature, the expressions of a broad and catholic humanity. Mr. Wilson has a great contempt for the mere pedant; and for the mere æsthete he has very small sympathy. His mind is steeped in the best traditions of his own language. He speaks of Montaigne and of Montesquieu with high respect, but I do not remember that, in his literary essays, he mentions any other French authors. Though his work in political science shows that he is familiar with German, Lessing is, I think, the only German classic to whom he refers. His deep literary piety, if one may so phrase it, speaks in a hundred passages—

notably in the conclusion of the essay from which "Mere Literature" takes its title.

If this free people to which we belong is to keep its fine spirit, its perfect temper amidst affairs, its high courage in the face of difficulties, its wise temperateness and wide-eyed hope, it must continue to drink deep and often from the old wells of English undefiled, quaff the keen tonic of its best ideals, keep its blood warm with all the great utterances of exalted purpose and pure principle of which its matchless literature is full. The great spirits of the past must command us in the tasks of the future. Mere literature will keep us pure and keep us strong. Even though it puzzle or altogether escape scientific method, it may keep our horizon clear for us, and our eyes glad to look bravely forth upon the world.

Listen, again, to the thought inspired in him by this (and another) passage from Burke: "We cannot, I fear, falsify the pedigree of this fierce people (the American colonists) and persuade them that they are not sprung from a nation in whose veins the blood of freedom circulates. The language in which they would hear you tell them this tale would detect the imposition; your speech would betray you. An Englishman is the unfittest person on earth to argue

another Englishman into slavery." This is Mr. Wilson's comment:

Does not your blood stir at these passages? And is it not because, besides loving what is nobly written, you feel that every word strikes toward the heart of things that have made your blood what it has proved to be in the history of our race?

It does not seem to be on record that Mr. Wilson ever ventured across the frontiers of meter; but, if he is not a poet, it is certainly not for lack of imagination. The last essay in "Mere Literature," entitled "The Course of American History," presents a nobly imaginative picture of the conquest of the continent. Selection is difficult, because of the fine coherence of the process of thought which runs through the paper; but the following passages may convey some taste of its quality:

The passes of the eastern mountains were the arteries of the nation's life. The real breath of our growth and manhood came into our nostrils when first, like Governor Spotswood and that gallant company of Virginian gentlemen that rode with him in the far year, 1716, the Knights of the Order of the Golden Horseshoe, our pioneers stood upon the ridges of the eastern

hills and looked down upon those reaches of the continent where lay the paths of the westward migration. There, upon the courses of the distant rivers that gleamed before them in the sun, down the further slopes of the hills beyond, out upon the broad fields that lay upon the fertile banks of the "Father of Waters," up the long tilt of the continent to the vast hills that looked out upon the Pacific—there were the regions in which, joining with people from every race and clime under the sun, they were to make the great compounded nation whose liberty and mighty works of peace were to cause all the world to stand at gaze.

How finely touched, again, is this picture of the breed of men by whom the conquest was accomplished:

A roughened race embrowned in the sun, hardened in manner by a coarse life of change and danger, loving the rude woods and the crack of the rifle, living to begin something new every day, striking with the broad and open hand, delicate in nothing but the touch on the trigger, leaving cities in its track as if by accident rather than by design, settling again to the steady ways of a fixed life only when it must: such was the American people whose achievement it was to be to take possession of their continent from end to end ere their national government was a single century old.

The paper ends with a fine tribute to Lincoln. No one has spoken more worthily than Woodrow

Wilson of his two great predecessors in the presidential chair. It is not in this essay, however, but in an earlier one, that he says of Lincoln: "To the Eastern politicians he seemed like an accident; but to history he must seem like a providence."

Some of Mr. Wilson's most characteristic work is to be found in his occasional papers and addresses. One of the most thoughtful of his essays is entitled: "When a Man comes to Himself," or, in other words, realizes his predestinate place and function in the world. The following is Mr. Wilson's ingenious variation on a theme as old as the Forest of Arden: "All the world's a stage":

A man *is* the part he plays among his fellows. He is not isolated; he cannot be. . . . Some play with a certain natural passion; an unstudied directness, without grace, without modulation, with no study of the masters, or consciousness of the pervading spirit of the plot; others give all their thought to their costume and think only of the audience; a few act as those who have mastered the secrets of a serious art, with deliberate subordination of themselves to the great end and motive of the play, spending themselves like good servants, indulging no wilfulness, obtruding no eccentricity, lending heart and tone and gesture to the perfect prog-

ress of the action. These have "found themselves," and have all the ease of a perfect adjustment.

An essay "On Being Human" is full of pregnant passages. "It is certainly human," says our author, "to mind your neighbor's business as well as your own. Gossips are only sociologists upon a mean and petty scale." And again: "Is it because we are better at being common scolds than at being wise advisers that we prefer little reforms to big ones?" Many good things have been said about books and reading: indeed, whole anthologies have been composed of them; but none of the anthologies contains anything better than this:

You devour a book meant to be read, not because you would fill yourself or have an anxious care to be nourished, but because it contains such stuff as it makes the mind hungry to look upon. Neither do you read it to kill time, but to lengthen time, rather adding to it its natural usury by living the more abundantly while it lasts, joining another's life and thought to your own.

Here, again, is a passage which touches the very root of the evils from which the world of to-day is suffering:

We do not want our poetry from grammarians, nor our tales from philologists, nor our history from theorists. . . . Neither do we want our political economy from tradesmen nor our statesmanship from mere politicians, but from those who see more and care for more than these men see or care for.

If in this passage Mr. Wilson hints at the type of statesman which the world, to its sorrow, has so plentifully bred in these latter days, he also gives us, in the following character of "the truly human man," an outline of the qualities in which healing may be found:

This is our conception of the truly human man; a man in whom there is a just balance of faculties, a catholic sympathy—no brawler, no fanatic, no pharisee; not too credulous in hope, not too desperate in purpose; warm, but not hasty; ardent, and full of definite power, but not running about to be pleased and deceived by every new thing.

To some people this may seem a prosaic and pedestrian ideal of character. There are men and women (they have, no doubt, their uses in the world) in whose eyes not to be a fanatic is to be a philistine, and who despise nothing so much as the Horatian conception of the *justum*

ac tenacem propositi virum. But the driving power of the world does not come from fanaticism, even if its inspiration be good. It may have the momentary value of a stimulant, helpful in a great crisis, even if its help has to be paid for by subsequent reaction. But it is calm and resolute reason that does the lasting things, while impatient idealism exhausts itself in untimely strivings and vain denunciations. To borrow an illustration from President Wilson himself, it was not the passionate abolitionism of William Lloyd Garrison that abolished slavery—it was the imperturbable wisdom of Abraham Lincoln.

I have not, in this short study, attempted any critical estimate of President Wilson's place in American literature. My object has been simply to show that, whatever else he may be, he is a man of letters to the finger-tips—a man steeped in literary traditions, and possessed of fine literary gifts. He can make political science readable to the layman (no small achievement, by the way), and he can make history fascinating without imparting to it the cheap over-coloring of fiction or the hectic fervor of partisanship. This aspect of his genius is not sufficiently recognized either here or in his own country. His administrative

achievements, both in education and politics, and his fame as a statesman, have eclipsed his reputation as an author. But there can be little doubt that if he had not abandoned the contemplative for the active life, he would have taken a high place among contemporary writers of the English language; and, even as it is, it ought not to be forgotten that this great President is at the same time an accomplished and attractive man of letters.

III

PRINCETON

IT was as President of Princeton that Mr. Wilson was first enabled to give proof of that force of character and executive ability which, ten years later, made him President of the United States. An American University offers far more opportunity than an English University, composed of separate and practically autonomous colleges, for an individual will to impress itself upon the educational and social policy of the whole institution. His twelve years of work as a professor had enabled Mr. Wilson to form very decided views as to the defects of the existing system. He approached his new task in the spirit of a genial but resolute reformer, both on the educational and on the social side. The educational part of his programme he carried out with brilliant success; on the social side he encountered difficulties which he very nearly overcame, but which ultimately proved insuperable.

There had for some time been a tendency in American Universities to allow their undergraduates undue latitude in the choice of their subjects of study. They were too readily permitted to follow the line of least resistance, and either to obey the dictates of immature taste (more rightly to be termed fancy), or to specialize too soon on "bread-studies," as distinct from the less obviously remunerative branches of study which are essential to mental discipline and general culture. To this abuse of the "elective" system Mr. Wilson offered a determined opposition, which produced excellent results at Princeton, and has had great influence in other universities. He insisted on the necessity of a certain amount of "drill" as the basis of all sound education. In an address to Princeton alumni, delivered in New York soon after he entered upon office, he said:

There are different sorts of subjects in a curriculum, let me remind you; there are drill subjects, which I suppose are mild forms of torture, but to which every man must submit. So far as my own experience is concerned, the natural carnal man never desires to learn mathematics. . . . There are some drill subjects which are just as necessary as measles in order to make a man a grown-up person; he must have gone

through those things in order to qualify himself for the experiences of life; he must have crucified his will. . . . That I believe is necessary for the salvation of his soul.

But while in this passage he laid down a sound principle as to the function of education in general, it was in his Inaugural Address at Princeton (October 25th, 1902) that he propounded his ideal of university education in particular:

There are two ways of preparing a young man for his life-work. One is to give him the skill and special knowledge which will make a good tool, an excellent bread-winning tool of him; and for thousands of young men that way must be followed. It is a good way. It is honorable. It is indispensable. But it is not for the college, and it never can be for the college. The college should seek to make the men whom it receives something more than excellent servants of a trade or skilled practitioners of a profession. It should give them elasticity of faculty and breadth of vision, so that they shall have a surplus of mind to expend, not upon their profession only, for its liberalization and enlargement, but also upon the broader interests which lie about them, in the spheres in which they are to be, not bread-winners merely, but citizens as well, and in their own hearts, where they are to grow to the stature of real nobility. It is this free capital of mind the world

most stands in need of—this free capital that awaits investment in undertakings, spiritual as well as material, which advance the race and help all men to a better life.

“Free capital of mind!” Could there be a better definition of the ideal product of university training? It was with this ideal in view that the new President set about his re-organization of the Princeton curriculum. He made it impossible for a young man, before his aptitudes had been put to any real test, before even his tastes had got beyond the stage of mere boyish whim, to choose a “soft job” and make that his chief, or his only, academic interest. The system he introduced is known as that of “group electives.” During the student’s first two years, his choice is limited to certain strictly-prescribed groups of studies, while in the remainder of the four years’ course a certain latitude of selection is allowed, so as to leave ample room for the development of individuality. The change had a markedly invigorating effect upon the whole atmosphere of the University.

Before his advent, moreover, it had been too much the practice to convey information by mere formal lectures, which the student might or might

not attend, and from which, even if present in the body, he might very easily be absent in the spirit. The industrious student took voluminous notes, the idle student tried, when examinations time approached, to borrow the notes of his industrious comrade. It is the experience of many students, where the lecture system prevails, that the time spent in the class-room is largely wasted, and that there is much more profit in reading the professor's authorities than in listening to the professor. Mr. Wilson so modified this rather somnolent system as to bring the mind of the teacher and the pupil into more active and stimulating contact. Even so early as 1894, he had shown, in an article contributed to the *Forum*, that this reform was in his mind. He then wrote:

The serious practical question is: How are all the men of a University to be made to read English literature widely and intelligently? For it is reading, not set lectures, that will prepare a soil for culture: the inside of books, and not talk about them: though there must be the latter also to serve as a chart and guide to the reading. The difficulty is not in reality very great. A considerable number of young tutors, serving their novitiate for full university appointments, might easily enough effect an organization of the men that would secure reading. Taking them in groups of

manageable numbers, suggesting the reading of each group, and by frequent interviews and quizzes [oral examinations] seeing that it was actually done . . . they could not only get the required tasks performed, but relieve them of the hateful appearance of being tasks, and cheer and enrich the whole life of the University.

This passage contained the germ of the “preceptorial system” which Mr. Wilson succeeded in establishing. It combined some of the features of the English tutorial system and of the German *Seminar*. The result was a very marked raising of the intellectual standard of the university. The mere drone was practically eliminated, and real keenness of interest in things of the mind was most effectually promoted.

It can scarcely be doubted, too,—though in this field results are less easily measured—that Mr. Wilson’s influence did something to check the tendency of American education (under German influence) to concentrate attention on the mere mint and cummin of scholarship, to the exclusion of its spirit and essence. The first essay in his book “Mere Literature” is for the most part a protest against this tendency. The ironic humor of the following passage cannot disguise

the fact that the author is very much in earnest. If you are to promote the study of great literature, he says, you must have a heart to feel with the great writers, "an eye to see what they see, an imagination to keep them company, a pulse to experience their delights."

But if you have none of these things, you may make shift to do without them. You may count the words they use, instead, note the changes of phrase they make in successive revisions, put their rhythm into a scale of feet, run their allusions—particularly their female allusions—to cover, detect them in their previous reading. Or, if none of these things please you, or you find the big authors difficult or dull, you may drag to light all the minor writers of their time, who are easy to understand. By setting an example in such methods, you render great services in certain directions. You make the higher degrees of our Universities available for the large number of respectable men who can count, and measure, and search diligently; and that may prove no small matter. You divert attention from thought, which is not always easy to get at, and fix attention upon language, as upon a curious mechanism, which can be perceived with the bodily eye, and which is worthy to be studied for its own sake, quite apart from anything it may mean. You encourage the examination of forms, grammatical and metrical, which can be quite accurately determined and quite exhaustively cata-

logged. You bring all the visible phenomena of writing to light and into ordered system. You go further, and show how to make careful literal identification of stories somewhere told, ill and without art, with the same stories told over again by the masters, well and with the transfiguring effect of genius. You thus broaden the area of science; for you rescue the concrete phenomena of the expression of thought—the necessary syllabification which accompanies it, the inevitable juxtaposition of words, the constant use of particles, the habitual display of roots, the inveterate repetition of names, the recurrent employment of meanings heard or read—from their confusion with the otherwise unclassifiable manifestations of what had hitherto been accepted, without critical examination, under the lump term “literature,” simply for the pleasure and spiritual edification to be got from it.

The writer of these delightful pages would assuredly lend no countenance to the dry-as-dust conception of scholarship which seeks to choke out its human and spiritual essence.

Having successfully introduced a new spirit into the educational side of the institution confided to his charge, Mr. Wilson, at the end of his fifth year of office, felt that the time had come to attempt the social changes demanded by his truly democratic ideals. His predecessor in the

office of President had declared it impossible that Princeton should be other than a college for rich men's sons, and it had been described as "the most charming Country Club in America." Its peculiar feature among American universities was the club-houses which formed the centers of social intercourse for the senior students. Twelve of these luxurious and exclusive establishments stood in their spacious grounds close to the University buildings. Only third and fourth year students could belong to them; but to secure entrance became the burning ambition of "freshmen" and "sophomores"—an ambition far more potent than the desire for distinction in scholarship, or even in games. The system involved a great deal of harmful wear-and-tear of mental tissue, and led to bitter heart-burnings and crushing disappointments. Moreover, it established a sort of plutocratic standard in the life of the University—a form of snobbery which ought to have been repulsive to sound American sentiment, and was highly repulsive to Mr. Wilson. He felt that the way to break it down was not to attack the clubs directly, but to establish a new order of residential halls or hostels, in which "men should be so distributed that rich and poor, elder and

younger, would be thrown together." Such hostels for freshmen and sophomores had already been successfully introduced in connection with the "preceptorial" system; and Mr. Wilson now proposed to extend to senior men the benefits, as he conceived them, of this form of collegiate life. His proposal was accepted by the Trustees of the University, only one dissenting; but when it was made public it met with a storm of opposition. American universities are largely dependent for funds upon the liberality of their ex-students or "alumni"; the affections of the alumni of Princeton were rooted in the Club system; and it was found that an attack upon it would so gravely impair the financial prospects of the institution that the Trustees were forced to withdraw their consent to the President's scheme.

In another, somewhat similar, episode, the power of the purse succeeded in baffling Mr. Wilson's idealism. The University lacked accommodation for post-graduate courses, and a lady bequeathed to it a sum of a quarter of a million dollars (£50,000) for the establishment of a Graduate School. A "Dean" was appointed for the as yet unborn institution, and proceeded to draw up proposals for "an ornate and luxu-

rious school, severed both in situation and in mental atmosphere from the rest of Princeton," which Mr. Wilson strongly disapproved. While the matter was in suspense, another bequest, this time of half a million dollars, was made to the Graduate School. It was saddled, however, with two conditions—first, that another half-million dollars should be raised from other sources, and second that the scheme of the aristocratically-minded Dean should be accepted. Mr. Wilson was immovable in his principles, and succeeded in working up the Trustees to such a point of heroism that (though the supplementary half-million was already promised) they had fully determined to renounce the whole million rather than sanction what they felt to be, educationally and socially, a false move. This would have been a great triumph to set off against the defeat in the Battle of the Clubs. But alas! at the decisive moment, a third bequest was announced, this time of three million dollars, on condition that the disputed scheme should be carried into effect. Such an argument was more than human nature could resist, and the Trustees pocketed at once their principles—or, rather, Mr. Wilson's—and the £600,000.

IV

NEW JERSEY

THE first book which Woodrow Wilson published was, as we have seen, "Congressional Government: A Study of the American Constitution." It reached its twenty-fourth edition in 1912. "In American literature," says Mr. Ford, "it occupies a place like that of Bagehot's treatise in English literature." The various professorships and lectureships he had held were all concerned with subjects germane to the public life of the nation. He had lectured on history, political science, political economy, jurisprudence and constitutional law; and in dealing with all these subjects he had shown penetrating insight, a rare grasp of mind, and a high, yet thoroughly practical, idealism. He was, moreover, a highly-trained and effective public speaker; and his Presidency of Princeton had shown him to possess the gifts of an efficient administrator and a

born leader of men. Such a combination of qualities clearly designated him to play a conspicuous part on the political stage; but, though he had delivered many occasional addresses on political subjects, he had not, until 1910, gone down into the arena and taken part in any political campaign.

His courageous and enterprising policy as head of one of the three leading Universities of the seaboard states had made for him a national reputation; but it was inevitable that he should be best known in the state in which the university is situated, only some ten miles from the state capital, Trenton. In the summer of 1910, the Democrats of that state, looking about for a candidate whose character and record would assure their success in the approaching election for the Governorship, fixed their choice on the President of Princeton. He had taken no step whatever to secure nomination; but when he was called upon to declare whether he would accept it if offered, he returned this straightforward answer:

I need not say that I am in no sense a candidate for the nomination, and that I would not, under any circumstances, do anything to obtain it. My present

duties and responsibilities are such as would satisfy any man desirous of rendering public service. They certainly satisfy me, and I do not wish to draw away from them.

But my wish does not constitute my duty, and, if it should turn out to be true, as so many well-informed persons have assured me they believe it will, that it is the wish and hope of a decided majority of the thoughtful Democrats of the state, that I should consent to accept the party's nomination for the great office of Governor, I should deem it my duty, as well as an honor and a privilege, to do so.

His strength as a candidate was shown by the fact that, when the Democratic State Convention met in September, he was nominated on the first ballot; and he carried the election, in November, not, indeed, by a majority of the whole votes, but by a "plurality" of nearly 50,000 over the candidate who stood next to him.

The wire-pullers of the Democratic party in New Jersey had accepted Mr. Wilson as a "strong" candidate—that is to say, one likely to appeal to the individual voter—but also, perhaps, in the hope that, being new to the activities of political life, he would prove a weak and easily-managed Governor. Of this illusion, if they in-

deed cherished it, they were quickly disabused. The democratic "boss" was a gentleman of whose record Mr. Wilson had no high opinion, and, in agreeing to stand for the Governorship, he had stipulated that this politician should not figure on the same "ticket" as candidate for the position of United States Senator from New Jersey. The nomination for that position had accordingly fallen to a Mr. Martine. The election, however, had given the Democrats a majority of twenty-one in the two houses of the state legislature, by whom the United States senators are elected; and seeing this, the "boss," Mr. Smith, determined to offer himself as candidate for the senatorship, nothing doubting that his obedient henchmen would ignore the popular election and give him their votes. This was not only an autocratic overriding of party discipline, but a breach of an honorable understanding. Had Mr. Wilson permitted it to pass, he would practically have joined the ranks of the boss's henchmen. He did not permit it to pass. He gave Mr. Smith forty-eight hours to withdraw his candidature, with the intimation that if this were not done, he would publicly denounce him. The boss ignored the ultimatum, and the Gov-

ernor executed his threat. He did not go to the party wire-pullers, he went direct to the people, and at a series of public meetings, exposed the iniquity of the manœuver with such effect that, when the legislature met, Mr. Martine was duly sent to Washington, and the boss, his power broken, was left out in the cold.

The Governor of an American state stands to the legislature in very much the relation of the President to Congress. Even in his first book on the American Constitution, Mr. Wilson had deplored the complete separation between the executive and the legislative function on which the Constitution insists. It was his frequently-repeated opinion that "the separation of the right to plan from the duty to execute has always led to blundering and inefficiency." He had also freely criticized the system whereby almost all bills are referred to departmental committees of the various legislatures, often to be heard of no more. Practically the whole legislative function is thus delegated to these committees, who sit in private and of whose proceedings no record is available. When they report a bill to the House, discussion of it is reduced to a minimum, and the merits of a measure are seldom or never publicly

thrashed out.* There is, however, one constitutional provision which enables a Governor (or a President) of energetic character and strong convictions to exercise a very real influence on legislation. He is empowered, and indeed instructed, to give information to the "legislative body as to the state of the commonwealth, and to recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient." It is thus evidently within the rights of the head of the Executive to urge, though not to impose, his views upon the legislature; and Mr. Wilson was both by theory and by temperament inclined to make the fullest use of this prerogative.

From the moment of his entry upon office, he made it clear that the legislature of New Jersey had no King Log to deal with. He had announced a programme of sweeping reform, and he applied himself vigorously to securing its execution. His first great measure was an attack upon the system which left nominations for political office (or in other words, the composition of the party "ticket") in the hands of bosses work-

* Readers who wish to obtain an insight into the workings of American state politics (which are practically national politics in miniature) may be referred to Mr. Winston Churchill's excellent novels, "Coniston" and "Mr. Crewe's Career."

ing through carefully packed and manipulated delegations. A bill introducing, or rather reviving, the system of "direct Primaries"—that is, the nomination of party candidates by direct popular vote—was carried in spite of the most formidable opposition, entirely in virtue of the energy and resolution with which the Governor threw himself into the breach in its defense. Other measures of no less importance followed: an Employers' Liability Act; a Corrupt Practices Act of a drastic nature; and an act establishing a Public Utilities Commission for the control of all companies enjoying exceptional privileges (or "franchises") in view of services to be rendered to the community. The importance of this measure is apparent when we consider that in America almost all public services in connection with transit, lighting, water supply, telephones, etc., are in the hands of private companies, whose natural tendency is to take wide views of their privileges and narrow views of their duties. Their constant efforts to influence the legislature were a source of much "scheming, lobbying, intriguing"—and corruption. The Commission—a small body to which responsibility can easily be brought home—relieves the legislature of a func-

tion which it is ill fitted to perform, controls, in the interests of the public, the operations and the charges of the companies, and at the same time, in the interests of the shareholders, keeps an eye on their finances.

Mr. Wilson proved, in short, during his brief term as Governor, that he was no mere theorist in politics, but an eminently practical man, with a remarkable gift for getting things done. During the Presidential campaign of 1912, he himself gave an account of his stewardship in New Jersey, which may be summarized as follows:

I had no merit as a candidate for Governor, except that I said what I really thought, and the compliment that the people paid me was in believing that I meant what I said. Unless they had believed in the Governor whom they then elected, unless they had trusted him deeply and altogether, he could have done absolutely nothing. . . . The things that have happened in New Jersey since 1910 have happened because the seed was planted in the fine fertile soil of confidence, of trust, of renewed hope.

The moment the forces in New Jersey that had resisted reform realized that the people were backing new men who meant what they said, they realized that they dared not resist them. It was not the personal force of the new officials; but it was the moral strength

of their backing that accomplished the extraordinary result.

And what was accomplished? Mere justice to classes that had not been treated justly before. Every school-boy in the state of New Jersey, if he cared to look into the matter, could comprehend the fact that the laws applying to laboring men, with respect to compensation when they were hurt in their various employments, had originated at a time when society was organized very differently from the way in which it is organized now, and that because the law had not been changed, the courts were obliged to go blindly on administering laws which were cruelly unsuitable to existing conditions. . . . Nobody seriously debated the circumstances; everybody knew that the law was antiquated and impossible; everybody knew that justice waited to be done. Very well, then, why wasn't it done?

There was another thing that we wanted to do: we wanted to regulate our public service corporations so that we could get the proper service from them, and on reasonable terms. That had been done elsewhere, and where it had been done, it had proved just as much for the benefit of the corporations themselves as for the benefit of the people. We were not trying to do anything novel in New Jersey; we were simply trying to adopt there a tested measure of public justice. We adopted it. Has anybody gone bankrupt since? Does anybody now doubt that it was just as much for the benefit of the public service corporations as for the people of the state?

Then there was another thing that we modestly desired. We wanted fair elections; we did not want candidates to buy themselves into office. That seemed reasonable, so we adopted a law, unique in one particular: that if you bought an office, you didn't get it. I admit that is contrary to all commercial principles, but I think it is pretty good political doctrine. . . .

We adopted a Corrupt Practices Act, and an Election Act, which every man predicted was not going to work, but which did work—to the emancipation of the voters of New Jersey.

All these things are now commonplaces with us. We like the laws that we have passed, and no man ventures to suggest any material change in them. Why didn't we get them long ago? What hindered us? Why, we had a closed Government; not an open Government. It did not belong to us. It was managed by little groups of men, whose names we knew, but whom somehow we didn't seem able to dislodge. When we elected men pledged to dislodge them, they only went into partnership with them. Apparently what was necessary was to call in an amateur who knew so little about the game that he supposed that he was expected to do what he had promised to do.

The intervention of this simple-minded "amateur" in the politics of the world may one day be recognized as no less conspicuously beneficent than it was in the politics of New Jersey.

V

THE WHITE HOUSE

IT was perhaps the accident of his birth and upbringing in the South that originally made Woodrow Wilson a Democrat rather than a Republican. At all events, a Democrat he had been from his boyhood upwards. We have seen that, as an undergraduate, he declined to assume the Republican colors, and to champion a protective tariff, even in the mimic warfare of a debating-club. But there can be no doubt that he was temperamentally a Democrat in more than a merely technical and party sense. He believed profoundly in government by the people in the widest sense of the word—not in government by the privileged classes, and still less in government by gangs, cabals and conspiracies. What may have been in the first instance an accidental bias, had ripened, through study and thought, into a deep and settled conviction. Hav-

ing made a searching examination of all forms of human government, he had come to the deliberate conclusion that, when a people has arrived at a certain stage of political intelligence, it is best governed by persons elected to give effect to its predominant will. No one knew better than he the difficulty of securing even an approximately accurate expression of that will; no one knew better the abuses to which popular government is exposed. But he felt that the worst abuses of democracy were less noxious and more corrigible than the abuses of other forms of government, and he remained unswervingly loyal to the American Idea. It was the task of his political career to secure for that Idea an ever fuller and purer expression in the national life.

The original distinction between the Republican and the Democratic parties concerned the respective rights of the Central or Federal Government and the Governments of the individual states. The Republicans insisted on, and wished to extend, the powers of the President and Congress, the Democrats insisted on the principle of state sovereignty, and were jealous of all encroachments. The Civil War was a tragically intransigent assertion of state rights, including

the right of secession from the Union. The South failed in the great argument, and no reasonable Southerner now regrets the failure. Nevertheless the South remains solidly Democratic, and the principle of state rights remains an official plank in the party platform. But it is no longer the central plank. Of late years the most prominent article in the Democratic creed has been the principle that import duties should be imposed for revenue only, and not for protection of manufactures. Under cover of the protective tariff, a great system of monopolies had grown up, which Woodrow Wilson and his party believed to be in every way injurious to the true interests of the people. It was on that issue that the Presidential election of 1912 was fought.

The presidency of Mr. Taft had been a disappointment. Though an able and an honest man, he was too acquiescent. He lacked the energy and initiative demanded by the conjuncture of affairs. Reform was in the air: the only question was as to the principles which should guide it. In the three-cornered contest which ultimately took shape, Mr. Taft and the orthodox Republicans stood for an easy-going conservatism, which Mr. Wilson described as "do-nothingism" or "sit-

ting still for fear something should happen;" Mr. Roosevelt and the dissident, or, as they called themselves, Progressive Republicans, stood for reform on conservatives lines; while Mr. Wilson and the Democrats stood for what was considered radical reform, though its radicalism, as we shall see, was of no very alarming type.

The principles for which Mr. Wilson contended may be best studied in his campaign speeches, a selection from which has been published under the title of "The New Freedom."

In the first place, let us take an utterance in which the speaker nails the colors of Democracy to his mast, proclaiming himself a Democrat not merely in the technical but in the most fundamental sense:

The utility, the vitality, the fruitage of life does not come from the top to the bottom; it comes, like the natural growth of a great tree, from the soil, up through the trunk into the branches to the foliage and the fruit. The great struggling unknown masses of the men who are at the base of everything are the dynamic force that is lifting the levels of society. A nation is as great, and only as great, as her rank and file.

A hostile critic might say that such a paradox savored not so much of the democrat as of the demagogue, and recommend Mr. Wilson to read Ibsen's "Enemy of the People." But, rightly interpreted, the saying is profoundly true. The champions of things as they were, and notably of the high tariff and all that followed in its train, pointed to the "prosperity" which had accompanied the organization of "big business." This was Mr. Wilson's reply. He meant that no amount of statistical prosperity is worth anything to a nation if it is purchased at the cost of human worth and human freedom. No nation deserves to be called "great" in which the mass of the people is led captive by organized and self-seeking interests. Towards the end of the speech he returned to the theme in the following passage:

Nothing living can blossom into fruitage unless through nourishing stalks deep-planted in the common soil. The rose is merely the evidence of the vitality of the root; and the real source of its beauty; the very blush that it wears upon its tender cheek, comes from those silent sources of life that lie hidden in the chemistry of the soil. Up from that soil, up from the silent bosom of the earth, rise the currents of life and energy. Up from the common soul, up from the quiet heart of

the people, rise joyously to-day streams of hope and determination bound to renew the face of the earth in glory.

In another place, Mr. Wilson thus defined his conception of that bent of the popular will which he was seeking a mandate to carry into action.

We are in a temper to reconstruct economic society, as we were once in a temper to reconstruct political society, and political society may itself undergo a radical modification in the process. I doubt if any age was ever more conscious of its task or more unanimously desirous of radical and extended changes in its economic and political practice.

We stand in the presence of a revolution—not a bloody revolution, America is not given to the spilling of blood—but a silent revolution, whereby America will insist upon recovering in practice those ideals which she has always professed, a Government devoted to the general interest, and not to special interests.

What, then, was the precise evil which Mr. Wilson pledged himself to combat? He defined it as follows:

The facts of the situation amount to this: That a comparatively small number of men control the raw material of this country; that a comparatively small

number of men control the water-powers that can be made useful for the economical production of the energy to drive our machinery; that that same number of men largely control the railroads; that by agreements handed around among themselves, they control prices, and that that same group of men control the larger credits of the country.

In another place he enlarged upon this indictment:

Who have been consulted when important measures of government, like tariff acts, and currency acts, and railroad acts, were under consideration? The people whom the tariff chiefly affects, the people for whom the currency is supposed to exist, the people who pay the duties and ride on the railroads? Oh! no. What do they know about such matters? The gentlemen whose ideas have been sought are the big manufacturers, the bankers, and the heads of the great railroad combinations. The masters of the Government of the United States are the combined capitalists and manufacturers of the United States. It is written over every intimate page of the records of Congress; it is written all through the history of conferences at the White House, that the suggestions of economic policy in this country have come from one source, not from many sources; the benevolent guardians, the kind-hearted trustees, who have taken the troubles of government off our hands have become so conspicuous that

almost anybody can write out a list of them. They have become so conspicuous that their names are mentioned upon almost every political platform. The men who have undertaken the interesting job of taking care of us do not force us to requite them with anonymously directed gratitude. We know them by name.

At the same time Mr. Wilson was always scrupulous in asserting that he was not attacking individuals:

I want to record my protest against any discussion of this matter which would seem to indicate that there are bodies of our fellow-citizens who are trying to grind us down and do us injustice. There are some men of that sort. I don't know how they sleep o' nights, but there are men of that kind. Thank God, they are not numerous. The truth is, we are all caught in a great economic system which is heartless.

The danger of the situation, as Mr. Wilson saw it, lay in the fact expressed in the old saying that a corporation "has neither a body to be kicked nor a soul to be damned." The law, framed in and for a time when "big business" in the modern sense was as yet scarcely dreamt of, and when a nation's rights in the national resources of its territory were very imperfectly

recognized, was quite inadequate to dealing with the new situation which had arisen, both in regard to the relations between employers and employed, and to the development of the potential wealth of the country. On the latter point Mr. Wilson said:

Then there is the question of conservation. What is our fear about conservation? The hands that are being stretched out to monopolize our forests, to prevent the use of our great power-producing streams, the hands that are being stretched into the bowels of the earth to take possession of the great riches that lie hidden in Alaska and elsewhere in the incomparable domain of the United States, are the hands of monopoly. Are these men to continue to stand at the elbow of Government, and tell us how we are to save ourselves—from themselves? You cannot settle the question of conservation while monopoly is close to the ears of those who govern. And the question of conservation is a great deal bigger than the question of saving our forests and our mineral resources and our waters; it is as big as the life and happiness and strength and elasticity and hope of our people.

In a later speech he drove home the same point with still greater emphasis.

What would our forests be worth without vigorous and intelligent men to make use of them? Why should

we conserve our natural resources, unless we can by the magic of industry transmute them into the wealth of the world? What transmutes them into that wealth, if not the skill and the touch of the men who go daily to their toil, and who constitute the great body of the American people? What I am interested in is having the Government of the United States more concerned about human rights than about property rights. Property is an instrument of humanity; humanity isn't an instrument of property. And yet when you see some men riding their great industries as if they were driving a car of juggernaut, not looking to see what multitudes prostrate themselves before the car and lose their lives in the crushing effect of their industry, you wonder how long men are going to be permitted to think more of their machinery than they think of their men.

And how did Mr. Wilson propose to set about the remedying of these abuses? In the first place, of course, he declared for the lowering of the tariff wall behind which they had ensconced themselves—the tariff which made monopoly possible, and handed over the government of the country to the small groups of men who benefited by it. Then he demanded the opening-up of the processes of politics. “They have been too secret,” he said, “too complicated, too round-about; they have consisted too much of private

conferences and secret understandings, of the control of legislation by men who were not legislators, but who stood outside and dictated, controlling oftentimes by very questionable means which they would not have dreamed of allowing to become public." Then he insisted on the opening-up of "the processes of capital as well as the processes of politics"—"denying to those who conduct great modern operations of business the privacy that used to belong properly enough to men who used only their own capital and their individual energy in business":

If there is nothing to conceal, then why conceal it? If it is a public game, why play it in private? If it is a public game, then why not come out into the open and play it in public? You have got to cure diseased politics as we nowadays cure tuberculosis, by making all the people who suffer from it live out of doors; not only spend their days out of doors and walk around, but sleep out of doors; always remain in the open, where they will be accessible to fresh, nourishing and revivifying influences.

In this connection he used one of those admirable illustrations which not infrequently light up his speeches:

It used to be true in our cities that every family occupied a separate house of its own, that every family had its own little premises, that every family was separated in its life from every other family. That is no longer the case in our great cities. Families live in tenements, they live in flats, they live on floors; they are piled layer upon layer in the great tenement houses of our crowded districts. . . . In some foreign countries they have made much more progress than we in handling these things. In the city of Glasgow, for example (Glasgow is one of the model cities of the world), they have made up their minds that the entries and the hallways of great tenements are public streets. Therefore, the policeman goes up the stairway, and patrols the corridors; the lighting department of the city sees to it that the halls are abundantly lighted. The city does not deceive itself into supposing that that great building is a unit from which the police are to keep out and the civic authority to be excluded, but it says: "These are public highways, and light is needed in them, and control by the authority of the city."

I liken that to our great modern industrial enterprises. A corporation is very like a large tenement house; it isn't the premises of a single commercial family; it is just as much a public affair as a tenement house is a network of public highways.

One of the abuses to be remedied by dragging "big business" out into the light was the interlocking of directorships, whereby one group of

men was able to control, not only their only particular business, but all the ancillary services which ought to be freely at the disposal of everyone. Mr. Wilson pointed out, for example, that "the twenty-four men who control the United States Steel Corporation were either presidents or vice-presidents or directors in fifty-five per cent. of the railways of the United States"—a condition of things which could not but throw grave doubts upon the treatment likely to be meted out to rival steel producers in regard to the transport either of raw materials or of finished products. Then, again, the same men were very probably directors of most of the leading banks, and thus able to restrict, if not entirely to cut off, the credit facilities of any one who threatened them with competition. Such concentrations of power in the hands of small groups of men were manifestly opposed to public policy; and Mr. Wilson believed that the way to remedy them was to throw the backstairs and corridors of "big business" open to the light of public inspection.

Mr. Roosevelt too had his plan for dealing with these evils. His proposal was not to overthrow monopolies, but to subject them to government

control. Of that scheme Mr. Wilson spoke in the following terms:

The Roosevelt plan is that there shall be an industrial commission charged with the supervision of the great monopolistic combinations which have been formed under the protection of the tariff, and that the Government of the United States shall see to it that these gentlemen who have conquered labor shall be kind to labor. I find, then, the proposition to be this: That there shall be two masters, the great corporation, and over it the Government of the United States; and I ask who is going to be master of the Government of the United States? It has a master now—those who in combination control these monopolies. And if the Government controlled by the monopolies in its turn controls the monopolies, the partnership is finally consummated.

In another place, he put his point even more forcibly:

If the Government is to tell big business men how to run their business, then don't you see that big business men have to get closer to the Government even than they are now? Don't you see that they must capture the Government, in order not to be restrained too much by it? Got to capture the Government? They have already captured it. Are you going to invite

those inside to stay inside? They don't have to get there. They are there. Are you going to own your own premises, or are you not? That is your choice. Are you going to say: "You didn't get into the house the right way, but you are in there, God bless you; we will stand out here in the cold, and you can hand us out something once in a while?"

It is not for me to pronounce upon the justice of this criticism; but the delightful raciness of its wording is beyond dispute.

These extracts give but a disconnected view of the well-knit body of thought which Mr. Wilson laid before his countrymen. The gist of his doctrine was that the people must resume control of their own affairs, taking it out of the hands of predatory millionaires working in collusion with political bosses on the one hand, and with irresponsible committee-men on the other. He believed that the American people were still capable of the effort required to this end, though "their self-reliance had been sapped by years of submission to the doctrine that prosperity is something that benevolent magnates provide with the aid of the Government." "The American people," he said, "are not naturally stand-patters. Progress is the word that charms their

ears and stirs their hearts." He took no melodramatic view of the forces opposed to him, but he did not underrate their strength. Here is a remark which evidently speaks from the heart of his experience as an administrator, and which all who have fought the battles of progress will endorse:

For my part, I am very much more afraid of the man who does a bad thing and does not know it is bad than of the man who does a bad thing and knows it is bad; because I think that in public affairs stupidity is more dangerous than knavery, because harder to fight and dislodge.

"Mit der Dummheit kämpfen Götter selbst vergebens," said Schiller's Talbot; and though Mr. Wilson is too staunch an optimist to say that "the struggle nought availeth," he knows how disheartening it is. Here is another remark from the same speech in which, for once, we may discern a little touch of bitterness:

The idea of the Presidents we have recently had has been that they were Presidents of a National Board of Trustees. That is not my idea. I have been President of one board of trustees, and I do not care to have another on my hands. I want to be President of the people of the United States.

He became President of the United States, but it was in virtue of the division in the forces opposed to him. In the votes of the electoral college he had an immense majority. The figures were:

| | |
|-----------|-----|
| Wilson | 435 |
| Roosevelt | 88 |
| Taft | 8 |

But, says Mr. Wilson Harris, "the popular vote rarely bears any recognizable relation to the electoral vote, since the party gaining a series of small majorities in populous states like New York or Pennsylvania or Illinois secures not merely a proportionate majority, but the whole state vote, in the electoral college." The actual number of votes cast for the three candidates were:

| | |
|-----------|-----------|
| Wilson | 6,286,987 |
| Roosevelt | 4,125,804 |
| Taft | 3,475,813 |

Thus the whole Democratic vote fell more than a million and a quarter short of the whole Republican vote. A single strong Republican candidate would in all probability have carried

the day. On the other hand, in both of the Houses of Congress there was (what is by no means a foregone conclusion) a majority of the President's party.

Mr. Wilson very quickly showed that the energy and determination which had made him the real, and not merely nominal, Governor of New Jersey, were not going to desert him on the wider scene of national politics. He delivered in person his first message to Congress, a practice which had the authority of Washington and John Adams in its favor, but which had fallen into disuse for more than a century. Jefferson, an ineffective speaker, had preferred to send his messages in writing, and all subsequent Presidents—even the facund Roosevelt—had followed his example. The first measure on which the new President insisted was, of course, a drastic downward revision of the tariff; and this was duly effected, though not without difficulty. At the same time, in order to make good the loss of revenue involved in the freeing of many articles, and lowering of the duties on others, advantage was taken of a new Amendment to the Constitution, and a small Federal income-tax was imposed. Scarcely

less important than the revision of the tariff was a Currency Bill, the purpose of which the President thus expounded:

It is absolutely imperative that we should give the business men of this country a banking and currency system by means of which they can make use of the freedom of enterprise and of individual initiative which we are about to bestow on them. . . . We must have a currency, not rigid as now, but readily, elastically responsive to sound credit. . . . Our banking laws must mobilize reserves, must not permit the concentration anywhere in a few hands of the monetary resources of the country, or their use for speculative purposes in such volume as to hinder or impede or stand in the way of other more legitimate, more fruitful uses.

The effect of the bill—which was carried against vigorous opposition, mainly by the personal incentive of the President—was to establish a new system of Federal Reserve Banks, under the control of a Federal Reserve Board at Washington, directed by the Secretary of the Treasury and the Comptroller of Currency. It is said to have proved itself already a very remarkable success. “The banking organs,” says Mr. H. J. Ford, “which started out by

treating the Act as a thing of very doubtful value, gradually swung around to the position of favoring an extension of its scope. . . . Whatever bitterness or resentment was left after the Act was swept away by the outbreak of the European War. The thought that the country might have had to face the financial disturbance caused by that event with no more facilities than the crazy old system supplied was simply appalling."

These were the principal measures of Mr. Wilson's first year of office. The second year, 1914, saw a more direct attack upon the monopolies. A blow was struck against "interlocking directorships,"* a Federal Trade Commission was established, and an Act was passed which strengthened the hands of an injured party under the existing and anti-trust laws, defined certain abuses, discriminations and restraints of trade, and legalized the boycott in

* "After the report of a Congressional Committee on money combines," says Mr. Wilson Harris, "the members of the great financial house of Morgan resigned thirty directorships of railroad and other companies, including New York Central and other Vanderbilt lines, the Western Union Telegraph Company, the United States Steel Corporation, the Guaranty and other Trust Companies, and the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company."

labor disputes. On the whole, when the war broke out, Mr. Wilson was in a fair way to redeem the pledges he had given, with regard to domestic policy. He had at any rate taken his place, once for all, among those Presidents whose personality has been powerful enough to override the hampering provisions of the Constitution, and impress itself deeply upon the nation's history.

The Democrats are sometimes called the Radicals of America, and Mr. Wilson's policy has been both praised and condemned for its radicalism. Surely with very insufficient reason. The radical solution of the problem of the Trusts would be the Socialist solution; and none other is radical. But Mr. Wilson is as far from coquetting with Socialism as any Trust magnate in America. He is an individualist to the backbone. Free competition is his watchword. It is because the Trusts strangle competition that he is their enemy. They prevent youthful energy and ability from obtaining the capital necessary for starting a competitive enterprise; and if by chance it is started, they "freeze it out" through their control of the subsidiary services on which trade and manufacture de-

pend. Of the wastefulness of competition Mr. Wilson has no fear. He does not for a moment consider the policy of taking over the Trusts (with the economies they undoubtedly effect or might effect) and working them for the benefit of the people. The word "nationalization" finds no place in his vocabulary. He would have private enterprise open to national or state inspection, but he is quite at one with the mass of his countrymen in his instinctive distaste for national or municipal enterprise. He will go so far (we have seen) as to lay it down that "Property is an instrument of humanity: humanity isn't an instrument of property"; but he steers clear of all criticism of the merits of private property as an instrument of human welfare. He insists on the conservation of national resources not already monopolized; but monopolization already effected is in his eyes sacred. Prescription he accepts as establishing not only a legal but a moral title. He is all for "the right of the Government to go down into the mines to see whether human beings are properly treated in them or not; to see whether accidents are properly safeguarded against; to see whether modern economical methods of using

these inestimable riches of the earth are followed or are not followed"—but, though the insistence on "economical methods" of operation would seem to be an encroachment on the rights of private property, the idea of resuming for the nation "these inestimable riches" is never for a moment mooted.

So much by way, not of criticism, but of definition. It seemed well to point out the limits of Mr. Wilson's radicalism. If he had shown the least inclination to dally with Socialism, he would never have been President of the United States, for he would not have been the representative American he undoubtedly is. In that fact lies the source of his strength. He stands at the head of the best American political thought—but he does not outstrip it. An idealist he is; but both by constitution and conviction he holds that it is the part of political sanity to work for practicable ideals. He does not waste time on speculating as to what may lie beyond the horizon.

It was fated, however, that during Mr. Wilson's tenure of office, foreign affairs should absorb the attention of the country, almost to the exclusion of even the most urgent questions

of domestic policy; and in relation to foreign affairs the constitution gives the President almost unlimited powers. One extremely difficult problem—that of Mexico—confronted him from the very first. It put his qualities as a statesman to the most searching test: and many people held that he failed to rise to the occasion. Let us see whether this view can be maintained.

VI

MEXICO

NOTHING in President Wilson's career has been more bitterly criticized, both in his own country and abroad, than his treatment of the Mexican problem. It is probable that when the time for dispassionate judgment arrives, nothing will be found to give clearer evidence of his strength of character and his political insight.

The problem was indescribably complex and thorny. After casting off the yoke of Spain in 1824, Mexico had passed through half a century of revolution upon revolution. In that space of time, says Mr. Wilson Harris, "it could boast of fifty-two presidents or dictators, one emperor and one regent, most of whom met violent deaths at the hands of their successors." At last, in 1876, the Presidency fell to General Porfirio Diaz, one of the leaders of the revolt against the ill-fated Maximilian. A man of

ruthless will and great executive ability, he established what his admirers have described as a benevolent despotism, which endured for thirty-five years. His benevolence, unfortunately, was lavished upon foreign capitalists rather than upon the people from whose ranks he had risen. He gave the country peace, and he gave it statistical prosperity. Year by year the spread of railroads, the growth of mining and manufactures, the increase of exports and imports, called forth the ecstatic comments of the financial Press. But this effect was attained by the simple process of giving away with both hands, mainly to foreign concessionaires, the magnificent resources of the country. For the condition of the people Don Porfirio cared nothing. Education was neglected, labor troubles were suppressed with a relentless hand, which, on at least one occasion, did not stop short of massacre. The appearance of law and order was maintained by the exercise of an unscrupulous and often cruel despotism. Though Diaz was not personally corrupt—he does not seem to have enriched himself beyond a reasonable measure—he was surrounded by a band of politicians, known as the *científicos*, for

whom even this moderate claim cannot be advanced. He went to the opposite extreme from his contemporary, Paul Kruger. The one fought to the death against the development of his country by outside enterprise; the other held out every possible inducement to foreign exploitation.

At last the "benevolent despotism" became unendurable, and a large party rose against it, under the leadership of Francisco Madero, a member of a great landowning family. A well-meaning idealist of no conspicuous ability, Madero succeeded in putting Diaz to flight, and was duly elected President. But tranquillity was never really restored; and a fortnight before Woodrow Wilson's inauguration Madero was murdered, and a rebel leader named Victoriano Huerta declared himself President.

The moment he assumed office, then, Wilson found himself confronted with a very knotty question: should Huerta be recognized? The foreigners in Mexico, who had suffered great losses, and endured not a few perils, during the disturbances, answered almost unanimously in the affirmative. They seem to have hoped that Huerta might prove another Diaz—less civilized

and even less scrupulous, but capable of maintaining order with an iron hand. European Governments took this view and recognized the usurper: Wilson, in face of the most urgent pressure, resolutely declined to do so. He was too faithful to democratic principle to employ the prestige of the United States in buttressing a blood-stained tyranny; and he probably thought, with reason, that, even if he were tempted to do so, the tyranny could not long maintain itself. In other words he did not want a new and more ruffianly Diaz, and did not believe that, even if he had wanted him, he could have found him in Huerta.

The advocates of a "strong" policy were not reconciled to what they considered Mr. Wilson's infirmity of purpose when he cordially accepted a proposal made by the A.B.C. states of South America—Argentina, Brazil, Chile—for joint mediation in Mexico. This was regarded by his critics as an unworthy condescension, and a shirking of responsibility which the United States ought to have faced alone. A conference assembled at Niagara—on Canadian soil—in May, 1914. It did not lead to definite action, but certainly promoted a good understanding

between the Powers of the South and the great Power of the North.

Meanwhile chaos reigned in Mexico, where two other guerilla leaders, Carranza and Villa, were making war upon Huerta. The arrest by Huertists, in April, 1914, of a landing-party of American sailors led to a serious complication, and the port of Vera Cruz was occupied by an American force, and held (not without loss) till reparation was made. Huerta soon found his position untenable, and fled the country, leaving it in the hands of three rival Presidents, Carranza, Villa, and Zapata. In August, 1914, a conference of representatives of Latin-American states met, by Mr. Wilson's invitation, at Washington, and joint Pan-American intervention was agreed upon, if, within three months, affairs in Mexico had not taken a decided turn for the better. But now it seemed that Carranza was actually gaining the upper hand, and had a fair prospect of restoring peace and order. Mr. Wilson decided to recognize his Government; but the hopes founded upon his success proved vain. The next incident was an irruption by the bandit Villa into American territory. This necessitated the dispatch of a

punitive expedition under General Pershing, which was unable to round up the offender—a practically impossible feat—and was vehemently resented by Carranza. Thus the action of President Wilson's Government seemed fated to appear inglorious and ineffectual. The pacification of Mexico remained—and remains—unaccomplished; and the "interests" which suffered not unnaturally laid the blame upon the "pusillanimity," the "vacillation," the "opportunism" of the President's policy.

Never were terms at once so specious and so utterly misapplied. It is not pusillanimity and vacillation, but magnanimity and constancy, that pursues an unpopular and unimpressive course merely because it happens that, on a calm balancing of the consequences, the only possible alternative is seen to be disastrous. What was the alternative to President Wilson's policy? It could only have been, in the first place, a great and bloody war. All parties in Mexico—as was clear from the declarations of Madero and the action of Carranza—would have made common cause against an invader, and the United States would have had on their hands a problem vaster and more difficult than that

which Britain encountered in South Africa. In the second place, this war would have worn the appearance, at any rate, of a war of conquest, and would have alienated once for all the other Spanish-American states, already sufficiently prone to question the disinterestedness of their great neighbor of the North. In the third place, the utmost success attainable would have left the United States saddled with the charge of a vassal republic, resentful, turbulent, entirely indisposed to accept and profit by the tutelage of its conqueror. It would have had to be controlled, for a long time at any rate, by American proconsuls, who, if they acted honestly in the interests of the people, could not possibly have revived the system of exploitation which had flourished under Diaz, and which was the very thing that those who clamored for intervention were longing to see revived. All this President Wilson saw; and we can scarcely doubt that, after August, 1914, he was more and more convinced that, when the larger interests of his country and of humanity were inextricably involved in the European War, it would be madness for the United States to tie themselves up in a local complication which would absorb

their energies for years, and from which no really satisfactory issue was within the horizon of practical politics. When civilization and order reign on one side of a frontier and chaotic semi-barbarism on the other, there is always a great temptation for the civilized Power to step in and restore with the strong hand—or, in more modern parlance, with “the big stick”—tranquillity and the reign of law. Nor is it to be doubted that there are occasions when such a course of action is justified. But history will probably hold with President Wilson that this was not one of these occasions. Effective intervention would have forced upon the United States a part which neither their principles nor the form of their polity fitted them to play. It would have compromised instead of confirming the position to which they naturally aspired of “*primus inter pares*” among the republics of the New World. It would for a time have made bad worse in Mexico, and might in the end have retarded rather than hastened the pacification of the country and the establishment of true self-government, as distinct from an autocracy working (when it suited its convenience) under a thin pretense of republican forms.

In a conjuncture in which the only choice lies, not between good and evil, but between two degrees of ill, the wise course and the brave course is to choose the lesser degree, even if the choice seem a tame and unheroic one. And to persist in that choice in the face of bitter, violent and contemptuous criticism may well be the truly heroic part to play.

VII

INTO THE WAR

IT is not my intention to write a history of the various phases of President Wilson's action with regard to the European war. A mere summary of the details would be tedious, while a full discussion of the various issues involved would run into volumes. My purpose is merely to survey the conditions which inevitably shaped the President's policy—conditions which some of his critics on this side of the Atlantic do not even now fully realize.

Though the President of the United States is mainly responsible for the conduct of the foreign affairs, it is not he, but Congress, that has the final voice in choosing between peace and war. This means that it is literally impossible for the President to declare war unless he has the country, as represented by Congress, behind him. But this technical impossibility was only the outward and visible sign of a more deep-

seated impediment to any early and prompt intervention in the European struggle. It was possible that, in a moment of excitement, such as that which followed the *Lusitania* outrage, a snatch vote of Congress might have sanctioned war; but that would have been of little use unless the real heart of the people had sanctioned the vote of Congress. America possessed no ready-made military machine that could be set in motion at the touch of a button. The machine had to be created; and how could it be created if the heart of the people were not in the effort? Merely nominal intervention, ineffective and impotent, would have been very much worse than useless. Every President would have felt this; but Mr. Wilson aspired to be, and in a very real sense was, peculiarly a people's President, representing no class, nor region, nor interest, but the people as a whole. Without a united nation behind him he could not move and he did not wish to move; and until the nation was united, the strictest neutrality was not only the correct, but the only wise attitude to adopt.

Was the nation united in the early months of the war? Was it united even after the first

great U-boat crimes—the sinking of the *Lusitania* and the *Arabic*—had revealed the menace to civilization involved in German anarchism? The only answer to these questions is: certainly not. There has seldom been a less united nation, or one pulled in different ways by a greater variety of forces.

In the first place, about one in eleven of the whole population was either born in Germany or born in America of German parents. Many of these “hyphenated Americans” were deeply infected with the unscrupulous megalomania which had impelled Germany upon her reckless career; while almost all of them were eager to adopt the German legend of a peaceful Empire wantonly attacked, and to palliate the crimes of Kultur as legitimate measures of self-defense. To these nine millions of Germans, or Germans-once-removed, must be added large numbers of subjects of the Austrian Monarchy: much less unanimously devoted to the cause of the Central Empires, but still a factor to be reckoned with.

And what of the Americans who had no actual German or Austrian leanings? Was there any solidarity of feeling among them? None whatever. A certain number, mostly among the

cultivated classes in the Eastern States, had fairly strong British sympathies; but tradition and education had fostered in large numbers of the people a vague dislike for England; while the powerful Irish element was animated by a by no means vague antipathy for the Saxon oppressors.

There was, no doubt, a good deal of traditional and sentimental sympathy with France; but that was largely counterbalanced by the fact that France was engaged in the war as the ally of Russian despotism. Nor did Japan's participation in the Alliance tend to make its cause more popular in the Western States.

So much for the groupings begotten of what may be called initial sympathies and antipathies. What now of the fundamental attitude of the American mind towards war in general and European war in particular?

Pacifism, as a quasi-religious doctrine, was at least as strong in America as anywhere else in the world. It was very active, and very unsophisticated. The naïve expedition of the Ford Peace Conference to Europe was a characteristic expression of a by no means negligible phase of American opinion. And doctrinaire pacifism,

there as here, inclined its sectaries to refuse to draw even the most obvious distinctions as to the responsibility of the different parties to the war. All belligerents, by the very fact of their belligerency, were, in the eyes of fanaticism, equally insane and equally criminal. Fanaticism apart, moreover, there was, in the American people at large, a wholesome and thoroughly well-grounded detestation of the very idea of war—a detestation which there can be no doubt that President Wilson, as a typical American, very cordially shared. They had not, as a people, even the secret hankering after military glory which lingers, or lingered, in the hearts of the great European nations. War was in their eyes a last resource, justifiable only in self-defense, or, like the Civil War, in defense of some great ideal. Above all things, too, their national traditions made abstention from European embroilments almost an article of religion. The idea that America should keep herself to herself, and not mix in the feuds of the other hemisphere, was one of the maxims of political sagacity bequeathed to his successors by the Father of his Country; and it was a maxim that entirely harmonized with every American in-

stinct. The Monroe Doctrine, which the prescription of a century seemed almost to have incorporated in the Constitution, was founded on the principle of non-intervention. America could not well say "hands off" to Europe without subscribing to a reciprocal self-denying ordinance. Thus every accepted tenet of political wisdom reinforced the inborn peaceableness of the national disposition, and rendered it doubly difficult to conceive that it could possibly be the duty of the Western Republic to plunge itself into a contest arising from the rancors and cupidities of European monarchies and empires.

To all these reasons for quietude and abstention must be added the sheer lack of interest in the war felt by large sections of the American public. It was to them an insensate and sanguinary spectacle played out on a far distant scene—a spectacle which simply shocked them, and in which they could feel no personal concern. Battles in Europe did not seem to come home to them much more directly than battles in the moon. This factor of sheer indifference was not the least potent with which President Wilson had to lay his account.

And even if the obstacles to intervention had

been less formidable—even if he himself had felt less strongly that war is justified only when every means of avoiding it has been tried—there was yet another reason which impelled President Wilson to keep his country out of the mellay to the last possible moment. It was manifestly to the advantage of the world that, if it could be done without disgrace, one great Power should hold aloof from the sanguinary welter, should devote itself to the mitigation of suffering, and should be in a position to mediate between the combatants, as soon as the time should be ripe for such a service. Mr. Wilson did not forget the part played by Mr. Roosevelt in bringing the Russo-Japanese war to a close. It was clearly incumbent on him, if it could be reconciled with higher interests, to hold himself in readiness for the congenial function of the peacemaker. This was not the least of motives impelling him to hold indignation, however righteous, in check, and make patience his watchword even to the eleventh hour.

But if this was the line of conduct prescribed for him alike by personal principle and by official duty, it was plain that his only reasonable course was to maintain the strictest neu-

trality both in language and in action. Whatever were his personal sympathies, to have allowed them to appear in his utterances would have been both futile and improper. It was his business to speak, not his own mind, but the mind of America. It was his business to express, as nearly as possible, the ideas common to all American minds, not to make himself the mouthpiece of the partisanship of any one section. Nay more—it was his duty to urge moderation upon the more vehement partisans of every color, and not, if he could help it, to let the indiscretion of individuals frustrate the policy on which he had deliberately resolved, and for the successful carrying-through of which he was responsible. If these considerations be borne in mind, the bitter criticism which some of his utterances evoked on both sides of the Atlantic will appear to have been founded on an imperfect apprehension of the elements of an exceedingly complex problem. One or two of the phrases he employed may be open to verbal objection; but the defect, if defect there be, is generally due to over scrupulousness in keeping within the limits of the part imposed upon him by the situation and by his office.

The phrase "too proud to fight," used a few days after the *Lusitania* catastrophe, was certainly unfortunate. It expressed nothing of great importance and it invited misunderstanding. Its context ran as follows:

The example of America must be a special example, and must be an example not merely of peace because it will not fight, but because peace is a healing and elevating influence of the world, and strife is not. There is such a thing as a man being too proud to fight; there is such a thing as a nation being so right that it does not need to convince others by force that it is right.

The expression was casual and illustrative, a mere *obiter dictum*; but at such a juncture even *obiter dicta* ought to be carefully weighed lest they prove stumbling-blocks to understanding. It was a trifling literary lapse, thrown into wholly disproportionate prominence by the circumstances.

Another expression much dwelt upon by the President's critics occurred in a speech on the League to Enforce Peace, delivered on May 27th, 1916:

With its [the war's] causes and objects we are not concerned. The obscure fountains from which the stu-

pendous flood has burst forth we are not interested to search for or explore.

What is this but an absolutely obligatory declaration of neutrality? So long as America *was* neutral, it was not her business, as a nation, to sit in judgment, to investigate the causes of the war or determine what ought to be its objects. The League to Enforce Peace was not being projected as a partisan organization, but claimed to be equally beneficent and necessary whatever might be the rights and wrongs of the struggle. The expression "we are not interested" was perhaps ill chosen. It suggested private indifference rather than national impartiality. But apart from that the passage was merely the disclaimer of biassed motives which his position imposed on the head of a neutral state.

There is some excuse, however, for the objection taken on the side of the Allies to both these passages. On the other hand, there seems to be no excuse for the outcry which greeted the following paragraph in the note of December 20th, 1916, suggesting to the belligerents that the time had come for negotiation:

He [the President] takes the liberty of calling attention to the fact that the objects which the statesmen of the belligerents on both sides have in mind in this war are virtually the same, as stated in general terms to their own people and to the world. Each side desires to make the rights and privileges of weak peoples and small states as secure against aggression or denial in the future as the rights and privileges of the great and powerful states now at war.

Surely the irony of this passage ought to have been apparent from the first. It states a literal fact, for German professions "as stated in general terms," were full of nobility and sympathy for the oppressed. Had not Bethmann-Hollweg expressed the willingness of Germany to "place herself at the head" of a League of Peace? Had not Germany's sympathetic heart-strings been wrung by the atrocious conduct of the Allies towards Greece and other small nations? It was of these professions that the President was officially cognizant—what could he do, in a note addressed to both the contending parties, but take them at their face value? And this he did all the more readily, no doubt, because the contrast between Germany's professions and the flagrant and abominable facts

gave to the very suavity of his language a tinge of the bitterest irony. Here one cannot but suggest that the President has a right to reproach his critics with a certain slowness of apprehension.

When we pass from the consideration of words to deeds, the strictures sometimes passed on the President's action are seen, when all the circumstances are considered, to have even less foundation.

No one, surely, can suggest that America should have entered the war in the autumn of 1914, in exasperation at the German treatment of Belgium. She could not have prevented or in any way checked the crime; and it was precisely by keeping out of the war that she was able to some extent to mitigate the lot of the martyr country. Nor would it have helped to make the crime the subject of an official protest. This even Mr. Roosevelt admitted at the time. "Sympathy," he wrote, "is compatible with full acknowledgment of the unwisdom of our uttering a single word of official protest unless we are prepared to make that protest effective; and only the clearest and most urgent national duty would ever justify us in deviating

from our rôle of neutrality and non-interference.”

Not quite so clear, perhaps, are the merits of the President's action in the case of the *Lusitania*; but can any one, looking back on the course of events, seriously maintain that Mr. Wilson would have done wisely in attempting to rush his country into war on this issue? In so doing he would have obeyed the dictates of national passion, not of national honor and a reasoned regard to the welfare of the world. The war would have been practically a war of revenge,* undertaken, in the spirit of antique superstition, for the appeasement of the ghosts of the American victims. To make even the murder of 113 American citizens a reason for war without parley would have been wholly opposed to the very principle for which America is fighting to-day: the principle that methods of peace must be exhausted before arms are brought into play. This is the corner-stone of

* He could not have said then, as he said when the time came to take up Germany's challenge:—"The choice we make for ourselves must be made with the moderation of counsel and temperateness of judgment befitting our character and motives as a nation. We must put excited feeling away. Our motive will not be revenge or the victorious assertion of the physical might of the nation, but only a vindication of right, of human right, of which we are only a single champion.

the new world-order for which the Allies are contending. Are we to blame President Wilson because he did not suffer even the horror engendered by an unexampled atrocity to render him oblivious of the first article in his, and our, creed?

A headlong plunge into war would not have brought the *Lusitania* victims to life again, and it would have put an end to the last chance of inducing Germany to obey the dictates of international law and humanity in her conduct of the war at sea. The chance of doing so might not at best be great, but President Wilson had not the right to leave it untested. He had to deal in negotiation with an utterly insincere, evasive and cynical adversary; but he did actually obtain a qualified confession of wrongdoing in the case of the *Lusitania*, a disavowal of the *Arabic* outrage, and a promise that the rules of humanity should not be wholly set at defiance. He himself, in his Address to Congress of April 2nd, 1917, summed up the practical result of his efforts. "The Imperial Government," he said, "had somewhat restrained the commanders of its under-sea craft in conformity with its promise," given in April, 1916,

“that passenger boats should not be sunk, and due warning should be given to all other vessels,” so that their crews might have at least a fair chance of saving their lives. “The precautions were meager and haphazard enough, as was proved in distressing instance after instance in the progress of the cruel and unmanly business, but a certain degree of restraint was observed.” The attempt, by methods of reason, to make the German Government honest and humane was in the long run a hopeless one; but that could only be ascertained by experiment. In a controversy in which the bad faith of one of the parties is impudently displayed, patience in the other party cannot but have an air of pusillanimity. Again and again President Wilson was urged by onlookers, both at home and abroad, to “Call him a liar and make it a fight,” and was taunted with spiritlessness and irresolution when he quietly ignored the advice. Never, perhaps, was his strength of character more clearly shown than in the calmness with which he pursued his well-considered course, unmoved by impatient and uncomprehending criticism. However exasperating might be the recurrent instances of German effrontery, he knew that

he had not a compulsive case to lay before the mass of the American people; and he felt that to be the one indispensable condition of effective intervention.

As 1916 wore on, moreover, and the Presidential election drew nearer, he naturally became more and more unwilling to commit the country, without absolute necessity, to a vast enterprise which he himself might be unable to carry through. It ought clearly to be a point of honor in an outgoing official to take no momentous and irrevocable step which may impose upon his successor a responsibility which he may not desire, and to which, indeed, he may be unequal.

But in the meantime, as no one knew better than President Wilson, events were educating the country and proving that the aloofness on which Washington and Monroe had based their conception of a national policy was in very deed a thing of the past. Germany kindly undertook the task of arousing the American people to a sense of danger and a sense of duty. No one can deny her the praise of being a highly efficient educator in the dread and detestation of Germanism. The duplicity of her profes-

sions, no less than the ruffianism of her acts, aroused an ever growing resentment, which was not allayed by the tactless importunacy of her propaganda. Her accredited diplomatic representatives were found to be carrying on active warfare against American industry, and intriguing to involve the United States in domestic and foreign complications. These illicit and underground courses led to the loss of many American lives and to great destruction of property. One by one the agents of the Central Empires outstayed their welcome and were politely required to withdraw. The intolerable conduct of the official propagandist, Dernburg, after the sinking of the *Lusitania*, led to his prompt elimination; and he was followed by Boy-Ed, the German naval attaché, Von Papen, the military attaché, and Dr. Dumba, the Austrian Ambassador. At the same time events on the Mexican frontier were arousing the country to a sense of its inability to make its full strength, or a tenth part of its full strength, felt in any crisis calling for military action. A great "preparedness" campaign, in which President Wilson took a prominent part, was a result of all these converging influences, and accustomed

people to the idea that neither the Atlantic nor the Pacific now afforded them the old security from aggression. They might be called upon at any moment to defend their property or to vindicate their honor. Whether they liked it or not, they were members of the commonweal of nations, and must be prepared to play a part in world-politics worthy of their traditions and their ideals. If need be, they must step in to save the nascent world-democracy from falling a victim to an autocratic-militarist *coup d'état*.

In November, 1916, after a neck-and-neck race against a strong competitor, Charles Evans Hughes, ex-Governor of New York, President Wilson was elected to a second term of office. His position was thus enormously strengthened. In 1912, the international sky, if not unclouded, had threatened no such tornado as that which had burst upon the world. He had been elected on purely domestic issues, and had no direct mandate to deal with the momentous question of peace or war. Now he held the mandate. The country knew what to expect of him, and the country chose him. He had been patient,—indeed many thousands of those who voted against him had doubtless done so because they

thought he had been *too* patient—but he had shown unmistakably that his patience was not without limits. He had said, when the policy of submarine piracy had been first announced, that if the lives of American citizens were lost, “the United States would be constrained to hold the Imperial Government of Germany to strict accountability”; and though he seemed to have put a lax interpretation on that term, the principle he had laid down was clear, and any one who voted for him must have known that a time might come when the only possible method of calling Germany to account would be the method of arms. As time went on, moreover, Mr. Wilson had been more and more emphatic in his warnings to his fellow-countrymen that their position was no longer one of unsailable security, and that they might at any moment find it necessary to make great sacrifices in order to avert still greater dangers which threatened not only their own country, but the democratic idea throughout the world. He had said:

America was born into the world to do mankind service, and no man is an American in whom the desire to do mankind service does not take precedence over

the desire to serve himself. If I believed that the might of America was any threat to any free man in the world, I would wish America to be weak. But I believe the might of America is the might of righteous purpose and of a sincere love for the freedom of mankind.

And again he had said:

There are two things which practically everybody who comes to the Executive office at Washington tells me. They tell me, "The people are counting upon you to keep us out of this war," and in the next breath what do they tell me: "People are equally counting upon you to maintain the honor of the United States." Have you reflected that a time might come when I could not do both? And have you made yourself ready to stand behind your Government for the maintenance of the honor of the country, as well as for the peace of the country?

The man who had held this language, and who had had his tenure of power renewed by the people to whom it was addressed, could not doubt that his countrymen had full confidence in his judgment as to the time to strike and the time to refrain from striking.

When at last, at the end of January, 1917 Germany decided to stake everything upon the

chance of bringing the Allies to their knees by a campaign of "unrestricted" maritime murder, Mr. Wilson saw that the time for patience was past. Without a moment's hesitation, he severed diplomatic relations with Berlin. He still hoped, he tells us, that the United States need not go beyond "armed neutrality"—that is to say, the defensive armament of merchant shipping. But that hope proved vain when Germany intimated that "the armed guards placed on merchant ships would be treated as beyond the pale of the law and dealt with as pirates." Meanwhile the overthrow of the Russian autocracy had removed the one final objection felt by many Americans to making common cause with the Allies. On April 2nd, the President summoned an Extraordinary Session of Congress, and, in an address which will be remembered in history, recommended that war should be declared against Germany.

"The world-war," he said, "was determined upon as wars used to be determined upon in the old unhappy days, when peoples were nowhere consulted by their rulers, and wars were provoked and waged in the interest of dynasties, or little groups of ambitious men, who were accustomed to use their fellow-men as pawns and

tools. Self-governed nations do not fill their neighbor States with spies, or set in course an intrigue to bring about some critical posture of affairs which would give them an opportunity to strike and make a conquest. Such designs can be successfully worked only under cover, where no one has a right to ask questions. Cunningly-contrived plans of deception or impression, carried, it may be, from generation to generation, can be worked out and kept from light only within the privacy of Courts, or behind the carefully-guarded confidences of a narrow privileged class. They are happily impossible where public opinion commands and insists upon full information concerning all the nation's affairs. A steadfast concert for peace can never be maintained except by the partnership of democratic nations. No autocratic Government could be trusted to keep faith within it or observe its covenants.

“It is, unhappily, not a matter of conjecture, but of fact, proved in our courts of justice, that intrigues which more than once came perilously near disturbing the peace and dislocating the industries of the country have been carried on at the instigation, with the support, and even under the personal direction, of official agents of the Imperial Government accredited to the Government of the United States. Even in checking these things and trying to extirpate them, we have sought to put the most generous interpretation possible upon them, because we knew that their source lay not in any hostile feeling or purpose of the German people towards us (who were, no doubt, as ignorant of them

as ourselves), but only in selfish designs of a Government that did what it pleased, and told its people nothing. But they played their part in serving to convince us at last that that Government entertains no real friendship for us, and means to act against our peace and security at its convenience.

“We are accepting this challenge of hostile purpose because we know that in such a Government, following such methods, we can never have a friend, and that in the presence of its organized power, always lying in wait to accomplish we know not what purpose, there can be no assured security for the democratic governments of the world. We are about to accept the gage of battle with this natural foe to liberty, and we shall, if necessary, spend the whole force of the nation to check and nullify its pretensions and its power. We are glad, now that we see facts with no veil of false pretense about them, to fight thus for the ultimate peace of the world, for the liberation of its peoples—the German peoples included—the rights of nations, great and small, and the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life and obedience. The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon trusted foundations of political liberty.

“It is a fearful thing to lead this great and peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars. Civilization itself seems to be in the balance, but right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts, for democracy, for the right of

those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own government, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for the universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as will bring peace and safety to all nations, and make the world itself at last free. To such a task we can dedicate our lives, our fortunes, everything we are, everything we have, with the pride of those who know the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and might for the principles that gave her birth, and the happiness and peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other."

Never did nation go to war from purer motives of world-citizenship; never were a nation's motives more nobly worded than in this great utterance.

There are people who think that they have condemned, or at all events belittled, Mr. Wilson's conduct when they say that he kept his country out of the war to the last possible moment, and only brought her in when American interests were seriously attacked by the unrestricted submarine campaign. They forget that the President of the United States is neither an autocrat nor a knight-errant, and that it would be worse than foolish for him to attempt to play either part. No doubt it would have been a fine

melodramatic gesture to have thrown down the gage of battle on behalf of martyred Belgium, and declared America the champion of good-faith and of humanity whenever or wherever they are outraged. But even if he had had the right to make that gesture, it would in all probability have had no practical effect, for the country would not have stood solidly behind it. So far was it from being of one mind that the President had enough to do to resist the efforts of German partisans to force him into the non-neutral course of forbidding the export of munitions, because the Allies alone were in a position to avail themselves of this source of supply. Had he been a weak or pusillanimous man, or even a fanatical peace-lover, he would have found plenty of support in making timely concessions to German arrogance and brutality, and keeping out of the war altogether. His attitude, though patient, was always firm—so much so as to lose him the co-operation of his Secretary of State, Mr. Bryan. When in 1916 there was an agitation to keep out of trouble with Germany by forbidding American citizens to sail on the defensively-armed liners of the Allies, Mr. Wilson crushed it with a firm hand. He

wrote to Senator Stone, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate:

To forbid our people to exercise their rights for fear we might be called upon to vindicate them would be a deep humiliation indeed. It would be an implicit, all but explicit, acquiescence in the violation of the rights of mankind everywhere, and of whatever nation or allegiance.

He would not even suffer the resolution to be quietly shelved, but insisted that it should be brought before Congress and voted on. Everywhere his conduct was that of a strong, straightforward man—strong enough to pursue what he conceived to be the path of duty, even when he knew that in doing so he must incur grave misunderstanding and bitter misrepresentation.

Nor is it true that he brought America into the war because her material "interests" were threatened. They were, as a matter of fact, in little more danger than they had been ever since early in 1915. At all events, any "material" loss that might have been caused by unrestricted piracy was infinitesimal in comparison with the inevitable costs of a war in which America, as he declared from the outset, sought no conquests

and no indemnities. He carried his country into the war because Germany had thrown to the winds that last semblance of regard for international law or humanity, and because he saw, and his countrymen saw, that a world dominated by the spirit of German autocracy was an impossible world for a self-respecting and self-governing people to live in. Until it was absolutely clear that the very existence of democracy was at stake, he did not think that he had the right, even if he had had the power, to involve his country in the gigantic evils of war. He had borne injury and covert insult while that seemed the lesser of two evils; but when open insult to the United States was combined with a no less cynical disavowal of all restraint in the pursuit of the interests of Germany's ruling caste, he saw that with that caste no free man or free nation could live at peace. He declared for war, and the country rose at his summons. He had throughout played the part of a resolute, far-seeing, plain-speaking, democratic statesman; in the final moment of decision he proved himself a great leader of men.

VIII

PEACE AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

IT was a frequent, perhaps a constant, practice among the Greeks, after a victory, to review the battle and decide who had borne himself the most valiantly. But, if one may say so without irreverence, it was a very foolish practice. The decision could seldom be a just one, and it must always have led to futile and unnecessary heart-burnings. It would ill become the Allies, who have won not only the greatest, but the noblest, victory the world ever saw, to decline into ungenerous bickerings over their respective contributions to the glorious result. It is especially impossible to find any common measure to apply to those who bore the burden and heat of the day and those who intervened at a late, though decisive, moment. All that can or that need be said is that the magnificent effort of America, inspired and guided by President Wilson, was

of literally incalculable value to the cause of freedom and humanity.

And now the great President, among so many other and minor tasks, can devote himself to what he has all along proclaimed as his ultimate ideal—that of securing the initiation of a Society of States, whereby collective reason shall be substituted for individual violence as the arbiter in all disputes between civilized peoples. The idea is no new one. Many wise men of old—including Erasmus, Hugo Grotius, the Duc de Sully, William Penn and Immanuel Kant—have conceived and propounded it. But the time was not ripe: the world was too large and too incompletely interrelated. It had to acquire the complex and highly sensitive nervous system of to-day before it could develop a collective brain. Now the war, which has wrought so many miracles, can place to its credit this greatest of all: it has transmuted the utopian dream of the past into the most pressing and practical necessity of the future. Even the Germans realized that the devilish ingenuities of science, combined with the development of means of communication, had led to such an extravagant and illimitable increase in the potentialities of destruction, that

if the conditions of the past half-century were to continue for another fifty years, civilization must inevitably stagger to ruin and collapse under the sheer weight of armaments and military preparations of every sort. There is no reason to doubt that the aspirations towards world-peace, freely expressed by leading men in Germany during the last years of the war, were sincere enough. If Germany had won, she would have made her own League of Nations—but it would have been a league of forcibly disarmed nations under the heel of “Mitteleuropa,” armed to the teeth. Fate has decided for a League of Free Peoples; and many of us see in President Wilson our chiefest guarantee for its wise and successful organization.

He has not given his adhesion to any one of the dozen or more cut-and-dried schemes that are before the world. Whether he has one “up his sleeve” remains to be seen. He has emphatically stated the view that the League of Nations must be founded at the Peace Conference, neither sooner nor later. This may not mean, however, that it must actually have its constitution sanctioned and its mechanism devised in every detail. What is essential is that

its principle should be accepted, its existence assured, and some sort of provisional organization set on foot. That the Conference should complete its work without knowing whether the League is to exist or not is simply unthinkable. Upon the answer to that question must depend all the most important details of the settlement. Are frontiers to be human—that is, determined by race, language, national feeling, economic convenience—or are they to be “strategic”? Are the nations to banish cupidity and fear, and enter into a pact of mutual insurance against a renewal of the horrors from which they have just emerged? Or are they simply to “manœuver for position” in view of the next war? Is the peace to be a peace, or only a truce? Until that crucial point is decided, the Conference will be working in the dark. Strange as it may seem, there are forces at work to secure a decision in the wrong, the retrograde, sense. It is a priceless reassurance to know that almost the whole weight of America is in the opposite scale. For what other purpose did she enter the war but to secure the world-peace of democracy?

The war has left behind it innumerable sor-

rows that time itself can never heal. Even the exultation of victory is tinged with pain at the thought that the people who have brought on themselves—and more than merited—so dire a disaster, are the inheritors of so noble a birth-right, the countrymen of Goethe and Schiller, of Bach and Beethoven. But to us, in England, the war has brought one inestimable and imperishable joy, in the generous comradeship of a reconciled America. Which of us does not echo the words of Mr. Winston Churchill at the historic 4th of July meeting at Westminster:

Deep in the hearts of the people of these islands, in the hearts of those, who, in the language of the Declaration of Independence, are styled “our British brethren,” lay the desire to be truly reconciled before all men and all history with their kindred across the Atlantic Ocean, to blot out the reproaches and redeem the blunders of a bygone age, to dwell once more in spirit with them, to stand once more in battle at their side, to create once more a union of hearts, to write once more a history in common. That was our hearts’ desire. It seemed utterly unattainable, but it has come to pass. However long, however cruel the struggle . . . that complete reconciliation will make amends for all. That is the reward of Britain; that is the lion’s share.

To the subject of this brief memoir a great part of the miracle is due. Had a pedantic or a pusillanimous President sat in Woodrow Wilson's seat, it might never have been achieved. We owe much to the clumsy intrigues and flagrant crimes of Germany; but that is the sort of debt that is paid in contempt, not in gratitude. So far as any one man can be called the author of the great reconciliation, it is beyond all doubt the President who has been so steadfastly and so magnanimously faithful to the great traditions of his race.

APPENDIX

THE FOURTEEN POINTS

PRESIDENT WILSON, in his address to Congress, following Mr. Lloyd George's definition of British War Aims of January 5, said on January 8, 1918:

The programme of the world's peace is our programme, and that programme, the only possible programme as we see it, is this:

1. Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind, but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.

2. Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.

3. The removal, as far as possible, of all economic barriers, and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.

4. Adequate guarantees given and taken that na-

tional armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.

5. A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.

6. The evacuation of all Russian territory, and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest cooperation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy, and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing; and, more than a welcome, assistance also of every kind that she may need and may herself desire.

7. Belgium, the whole world will agree, must be evacuated and restored, without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations.

8. All French territory should be freed, and the invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, which has unsettled the peace of the world for nearly fifty years, should be righted, in order that peace may once more be made secure in the interest of all.

9. A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should

be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.

10. The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development.

11. Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro should be evacuated, occupied territories restored, Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea, and the relations of the several Balkan States to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality, and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan States should be entered into.

12. The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development; and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.

13. An independent Polish State should be erected, which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be secured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.

14. A general association of nations must be formed

under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small States alike.

An evident principle runs through the whole programme I have outlined. It is the principle of justice to all peoples and nationalities, and their right to live on equal terms of liberty and safety with one another, whether they be strong or weak. Unless this principle be made its foundation, no part of the structure of international justice can stand. The people of the United States could act upon no other principle, and to the vindication of this principle they are ready to devote their lives, their honor, and everything that they possess.

The moral climax of this, the culminating and final war for human liberty, has come, and they are ready to put their own strength, their own highest purpose, their own integrity and devotion, to the test.

THE FOUR GREAT OBJECTS

President Wilson, again on July 4, 1918, defined the issue and the aim of the war with a force and a conviction that clear the air of all doubt and give precision to the aim of diplomatic endeavor as well as to the armies and navies and the peoples behind them.

“There can be but one issue,” declared Presi-

dent Wilson at Washington's Tomb, Mount Vernon, on Independence Day, 1918:

The settlement must be final. There can be no compromise. No half-way decision would be tolerable. No half-way decision is conceivable.

These are the ends for which the associated peoples of the world are fighting, and which must be conceded them before there can be peace:—

First, the destruction of every arbitrary power anywhere that can separately, secretly and of its single choice disturb the peace of the world, or, if it cannot be presently destroyed, at the least its reduction to virtual impotence.

Second, the settlement of every question, whether of territory or sovereignty, of economic arrangement or of political relationship, upon the basis of the free acceptance of that settlement by the people immediately concerned, and not upon the basis of the material interest or advantage of any other nation or people which may desire a different settlement for the sake of its own exterior influence or mastery.

Third, the consent of all nations to be governed in their conduct towards each other by the same principles of honor and of respect for the common law of civilized society that govern the individual citizens of all modern States and in their relations with one another, to the end that all promises and covenants may be sacredly observed, no private plots or conspiracies hatched, no selfish injuries wrought with impunity, and a mutual

trust established upon the handsome foundation of a mutual respect for right.

Fourth, the establishment of an organization of peace which shall make it certain that the combined power of free nations will check every invasion of right, and serve to make peace and justice the more secure by affording a definite tribunal of opinion to which all must submit, and by which every international adjustment that cannot be amicably agreed upon by the peoples directly concerned shall be sanctioned.

These great objects can be put into a single sentence:

What we seek is the reign of law based upon the consent of the governed and sustained by the organized opinion of mankind.

INDEX

- Adams, Anne, 1
- Address to Congress of April 2, 1917, 95-96, 102-105
- Address to Congress of Jan. 8, 1918, 115
- America's reunion with Great Britain, 113
- Ancestry and birth, 1
- Arabic*, 84, 95
- Armed neutrality, 102
- Atlanta, Ga., 7
- Augusta, Ga., 3
- Axon, Ellen L., 8

- Banking reform, 67
- Belgium, 93, 106
- Bethmann-Hollweg, 92
- Big business, 56, 60
- Bolling, Edith, 8
- Bosses, 42, 63
- Boy-Ed, 98
- British institutions, 11, 13
- Browning, Oscar, 15
- Bryan, W. J., 106
- Bryn Mawr, 7

- Cabinet, 5
- Capital, combinations of, 55; secret processes, 59
- Carranza, 77
- Churchill, Winston, 113
- Civil War, 50
- Clubs, college, 36
- Columbia, S. C., 4
- Competition, 69
- Congress, 6, 11; war and, 82
- "Congressional Government," 6, 7, 10, 13, 39
- Conservation, 57
- Constitution, U. S., overriding, 69
- Currency bill, 67

- Democracy, fundamental, 52
- Democratic party, creed, 51; New Jersey, 41; original principle, 50
- Dernburg, 98
- Derry, J. T., 3
- Diaz, Porfirio, 73
- "Division and Reunion," 17
- Dumba, Dr., 98

- Education, 3; university ideal, 30
- Elective system in universities, 29
- Essays, 18
- Europe, American non-intervention in, 86
- European war, American initial feeling, 83; conditions shaping Wilson's policy, 82; settlement, 118; Wilson's address of April 2, 1917, 95-96, 102-105
- Executive prerogative, 43

- Federal Reserve Banks, 67
- Federal Trade Commission, 68
- First book, 6, 7, 10, 13, 39
- Ford, H. J., 67
- Ford Peace Conference, 85
- Fourteen points, 115

- Galt, Mrs. Norman, 8
 German-Americans, 84
 Germany, American declaration
 of war against, 102; in-
 trigues, 98; professions and
 conduct, 92, 97-98
 Governorship, 40
 "Group electives," 31
- Harris, Wilson, 65, 68, 73
 Health, 4, 7
 Historical writings, 16
 "History of the American Peo-
 ple," 16
 Huerta, 75
 Hughes, C. E., 99
 "Human man," 24, 25
 Humanity, 58, 70
- Income tax, federal, 66
 Interlocking directorships, 60,
 68
 Intervention in Mexico, 77, 80
- Johns Hopkins University, 7,
 10
- Kruger, Paul, 75
- League of Nations, 109
 League to Enforce Peace, 90,
 91
 Lecture system in college, 32
 Lincoln, Abraham, vii, 3, 22, 23,
 26
 Literary work, 9
 Literature, 18
 Lloyd George, David, 115
Lusitania, 83, 84, 90, 94, 95,
 98
- Madero, Francisco, 75
 Martine, J. E., 42
 Mental bent, 6
 "Mere Literature," 18, 20, 21,
 33
- Message to Congress, 66
 Mexico, 72, 73
 Monopolies, 51, 54, 62, 68
 Monroe Doctrine, 87
 Mount Vernon address, 119
 Munitions, 106
- Neutrality, 88, 89, 91
 "New Freedom, The," 52
 New Jersey, governorship, 40;
 reforms, 42, 46; senatorship,
 42
 Niagara conference, 76
 Note of Dec. 20, 1916, 91-92
- Pacifism, 85
 Pan-Americanism, 77
 Patience, x, 96, 100, 102
 Peace Conference, 111
 People, government of, 49, 52,
 53
 Political writings, 6, 7, 10
 Politics in New Jersey, 40
 Preceptorial system, 33
 Preparedness, 98
 Presidential election of 1912, 49,
 65
 Presidential election of 1916, 97,
 99
 Primaries, direct, 45
 Princeton University, 4, 8, 9;
 club system, 36; Graduate
 School, 37; presidency of
 Wilson, 28
 Protectionism, 49, 51
 Public Utilities Commission,
 45
- Radicalism, 69, 71
 Republican party, 50
 Roosevelt, Theodore, 52, 66, 88,
 93; control of monopolies,
 62
- Scholarship, 33, 35
 Smith, James, 42
 Socialism, 69, 71

South American states, 76
 Speech of May 27, 1916, 90
 "Slate, The," 14
 Staunton, Va., 1
 Steel, 61
 Steubenville, O., 1
 Stone, W. J., 107
 Stupidity, 64
 Submarines. *See* U-boats

Taft, W. H., 51
 Tariff, 51, 58, 66
 "Too proud to fight," 90
 Trusts, 69

U-boats, 84, 96
 U. S. Steel Corporation, 61
 Universities in America, 29

Villa, 77
 Von Papen, 98

War aims, 115
 Washington, George, vii, 86;
 "Life of Washington," 17

Wilson, James, 1
 Wilson, Joseph R., 1
 Woodrow, Janet, 2
 Woodrow, Thomas, 2



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